HOW TO PREPARE SERMONS

AND GOSPEL ADDRESSES

by

WILLIAM EVANS

$1.25
Net

HOW TO PREPARE SERMONS
AND GOSPEL ADDRESSES

By WILLIAM EVANS, Ph. D., D. D.

Practical help for ministers, theological students, and laymen who are called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Leaders in young people's societies, brotherhoods, men's classes, and similar organizations may find here effective help in their preparation of Bible Readings and Gospel Talks. The chapter, "Illustrations and Their Use," is especially useful.

MOODY PRESS
153 Institute Place
CHICAGO

MARGARET HELMAN
ANN STREET
HIGHSPIRE PA

HOW TO PREPARE SERMONS AND GOSPEL ADDRESSES

How to Prepare Sermons
and
Gospel Addresses

BY

REV. WILLIAM EVANS, Ph.D., D.D.

AUTHOR OF

"The Great Doctrines of the Bible," "Personal Soul-Winning," "The Christian: His Creed and Conduct," "The Book of Books," "The Book Method of Bible Study," Etc.

MOODY PRESS
153 INSTITUTE PLACE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Copyright, 1913, by
THE MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
OF CHICAGO

Printed in U. S. A.

FOREWORD.

This volume is not an attempt to present a complete and exhaustive treatment on Homiletics—the science and art of preaching, for there are already on the market larger and more comprehensive works on the subject. This book is prepared not only for theological students but also to supply the need of such as find themselves denied the privileges of a regular ministerial training, but who, nevertheless, feel themselves called upon to preach or proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed the lectures herein printed are in substance the same as delivered to young men and women preparing themselves for Christian service in a Bible training school. This fact accounts for their conversational style, which the author has not deemed wise to change.

Christian laymen, even though not preachers in the accepted sense of that term, desiring to be able to prepare brief gospel addresses and Bible readings, will find the help they need in this volume. Those seeking help in the preparation of "talks" for young peoples' societies, conventions, leagues, etc., may receive hints and suggestions in this work.

The book contains theory and practice. Part One deals with the method of constructing various kinds of sermons and Bible addresses. Part Two is composed of outlines illustrating Part One.

The closing chapter on "Illustrations and Their Use" has been found so helpful wherever delivered that it is thought advisable to give it a place in this volume.

WILLIAM EVANS.

CONTENTS.

PART ONE

Chapter.

I. Definitions 11

Meaning of "homiletics," "preaching," "a preacher"—Truth and personality.

II. The Personality of the Preacher..... 17

Importance of personality—Avoid imitation—Piety—Clean habits — Truthfulness — Spirituality — Gravity — Good health.

III. The Text—Its Choice..... 25

Importance and difficulty of choice—Advantages—Principles that govern choice—Wrong conceptions—Needs of the people—Cycle of preaching—The preacher's ability—Where to get texts—Necessary cautions.

IV. The Text—Its Interpretation..... 39

Rules for interpretation—Literal or figurative language—Exact meaning of words of Scripture—The writer and the readers—The analogy of faith. Sources of interpretation—Text—Context—Parallel passages—Helps outside the text.

V. The Theme 51

Thorough knowledge necessary — Adaptation to audience—Trivial themes—Definiteness of purpose—Sympathy with the theme—Suitability to time and occasion.

VI. Sermon Material—Gathering It..... 59

Necessity of constant gathering vs. special preparation—Value of meditation—How to meditate—Reading—Observation—Thought—Gathering and filing for future use.

VII. Sermon Material—Arranging It..... 69

Value of good arrangement—Necessary for effectiveness—Advantages to the preacher, audience, theme—Qualities of a good arrangement.

Chapter.

VIII. The Sermon Itself. A. The Introduction... 77

Its place and purpose—Interests an audience—Prepares the way for sermon proper. Its sources: the text, its setting and construction—Context—Historical setting—The writer and readers—Geography—Customs of the ancients—Occasion—Subject. Qualities of a good introduction.

IX. The Sermon Itself. B. The Body..... 89

How many divisions?—Their nature—Should they be announced beforehand? First general division, answering "What?" defining the theme by definition, explanation, relation, comparison, contrast, illustration. Second, setting forth the necessity, reasonableness or proof of the theme—How to prove a proposition, answering "Why?" Third, the manner, method, conditions under which the theme is brought about, answering "How?" Fourth, setting forth the results of accepting or rejecting the theme, answering "What then?" Methods of application—The motives that move men to action—How to appeal.

X. The Sermon Itself. C. The Conclusion.....107

Importance—Conception of the Greeks—The form it should assume—How to close a sermon.

XI. Expository Sermons 111

Why not popular—Definition and distinction—Advantages of this kind of preaching—Possible disadvantages—Hints and suggestions—What to avoid.

XII. Bible Readings 119

Definition and distinction—Advantages over other forms of sermons—Helps needed—How to prepare a Bible Reading—Suggestions and cautions.

XIII. Great Chapters as Texts.....129

Instructions regarding the choice of such chapters—Essential factors.

XIV. Illustrations and Their Use.....135

Their importance—Their purpose—How to find appropriate illustrations—Suggestions and cautions.

PART TWO

Outlines of Sermons, Gospel Addresses and Bible Readings 149

Specimen outlines of the various kinds of sermons and Gospel addresses.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITIONS.

1. Homiletics.

The word *homiletics* is derived from the Greek word *homilia,* and signifies either a mutual talk and conversation, or a set discourse. The preachers in the early church were in the habit of calling their public discourses "talks," thus making it proper to speak of what is in the present day in some quarters called "a gospel talk."

From the word *homilia* has come the English word *homiletics,* which has reference to that science, or art,—or indeed both, which deals with the structure of Christian discourse, embracing all that pertains to the preparation and delivery of sermons and Bible addresses. It shows us how, scientifically, to prepare a sermon or gospel address, and how, effectually, to deliver it. Homiletics, then, is the art and science of preaching.

2. What is Preaching?*

Preaching is the proclamation of the good news of salvation through man to men. Its two constituent elements are—a man and a message—*truth* and *personality.* The gospel proclaimed by means of the written page or the printed book is not preaching. There is no such thing as seeing "sermons in stones." Again, the proclamation of any kind of message other than the gospel message, which is the truth of God as revealed in the

* Cf. *Preaching,* by Phillips Brooks.

Bible, and in Jesus Christ especially, is not preaching. Much of what is heard from the so-called Christian pulpits of today is not real preaching. The discussion of politics, popular authors, current topics, and kindred themes may rightfully be called addresses, and may result in the emulation of the orator, but such efforts can in no sense of the word be called preaching, and such men have absolutely no right, so long as they continue to deliver such addresses from the pulpit, to the honored name of preachers of the gospel. The message of the very truth of God through man to men—that is preaching.

3. What is a Preacher?

The preacher, he who is separated by God for the specific work of the preaching of the gospel, is a man who, from one side of his nature takes in the truth from God, and from the other side of his nature gives out that truth to men. He deals with God in behalf of men; he deals with men in behalf of God.

This truth must not be mechanically expressed. It must not be merely truth through the mouth, over the lips, in the intellect, or by means of the pen, but truth through his character and personality. Every fibre of the man's moral and spiritual nature must be controlled by the truth. The force of a blow is measured not by the arm only, but also by the weight of the body behind the arm. And just here is the difference men instinctively feel between one preacher and another. The hearer is persuaded that the truth which is being proclaimed from the pulpit has come over one preacher, whereas it has come through the other. Consequently the preaching of the one is tame and uninteresting, while that of the other is strong, fascinating, and convincing.

The preacher must not be a mere machine, an automaton; he must be a real man—a good man, and full

of the Holy Spirit and of faith; and the effect of such a life and such preaching will be that much people will be added to the Lord (Acts 11:24).

The personality of the preacher has very much to do with the effectiveness of his message. An artist may be a profligate and yet produce a picture or a statue which will call forth the admiration of the people; an author may be dissolute in morals and yet produce a book that will set the world aflame with his popularity. These are works of art and can be considered apart from the man himself. But not so with the preacher and his sermon: it is a part of himself, indeed it must be the expression of his very life and experience. If such is not the case, then, what is called preaching will be nothing but "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Personality counts in preaching. Is not this one of the reasons why many sermons do not usually make good reading?—there is the absence of the personality of the preacher. Of course, there are some very splendid exceptions to this fact, but often, alas very often, the sermon is but an echo of the man. Have we not more than once wondered at the dryness of a sermon we were reading when at the time we heard it we were moved to the very depths of our being? What was lacking? The personality of the preacher, that is all—but how much is wrapped up in that personality!

The root of the matter must be in the preacher himself before he can proclaim it with convicting force in and through the sermon. Given a man who is a born artist and you have only to supply the palette and brush, or chisel and mallet with mere technical skill, and you have a statue or a picture. And if you have your preacher—a man with the root of the matter in him—you will find very little else is needed to set free the sermon that is in him.

From this it is clearly evident that true preparation

for the gospel ministry does not consist in mere tricks in sermon-making, or delivery, but in the development of true personality. Such a man in the pulpit will surely prove to be a preacher who will reach the masses.

We hear complaints on every hand to the effect that people do not want gospel preaching today. This is a mistake. There never was a day when people wanted it more than now. What they do object to is a gospel read or declaimed and not preached. In other words, they ask for a consecrated personality in the pulpit. Look abroad today, and what do you see?—that wherever the gospel is preached by consecrated personality, there are found men and women to hear it.

CHAPTER II

THE PERSONALITY OF THE PREACHER

CHAPTER II.

The Personality of the Preacher.

It has been said that truth and personality are the fundamentals of all true preaching. With reference to "truth" it is hardly necessary for the matter of the message to be considered here except to say that it must be the truth of God as it is revealed in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—that truth which is fitted for every man, and changeth not with the passing of the years.

This chapter deals with the preacher and the development of his personality. What kind of man ought the preacher to be? In the development of personality what elements in his character need to be emphasized if he is to be a real success in the ministry of the gospel?

1. He Must Not Be an Imitator.

Such a statement might seem, at first thought, to be altogether unnecessary, were it not for the fact that the average preacher is, in point of fact, almost anyone else except himself. Every truth the preacher expresses, every message he delivers ought to be stamped with his own personality, and should be expressed in his own way.

Let us remember that God has made no two faces or voices alike. Each man has his own individuality to stamp on the work which God has given him to do. If your name is David, and you are called upon to kill your Goliath, then covet not the armor of Saul, but

take your sling and stone, and, by the help of God, the boasting giant will fall and lick the dust. Many a man has failed in his ministry, when otherwise he would have been a glorious success, simply because he was not willing to take himself as God made him. The very individuality with which God has endowed us is the very thing which makes us worth hearing—otherwise a graphaphone could do the work about as well and at less expense.

It is worthy of note that men who copy the ways and manners of other preachers who have been successful almost always copy their faults and not their virtues, and in the attempt to do so become ridiculous in the extreme. What ludicrous results may be observed when men imitate with servility the doings of others! The ambitious young preacher who is setting up as a genius copies the peculiarities in attitude and manner of the popular preacher near him, and causes actual merriment in the very matters in which he thinks he is most effective. Such a preacher is much like those monkeys whose imitative power, Harris says, the Indians turn to destruction in this way: Coming to their haunts with basins full of water or honey, they wash their faces in the sight of these animals, and then, substituting pots of thin glue instead of the water or honey, they retire out of sight. The monkeys, as soon as the Indians are gone, come down and wash their faces likewise, and sticking their eyelids together, become blind, and are easily captured. In other places they brought their boots into the woods, and putting them on and off, left them, well lined with glue or a sort of bird-lime, so that when the unhappy monkeys put them on, they stuck fast, and hindered their escape. How many men have found it impossible to extricate themselves from corresponding difficulties into which they have been drawn through attempting to imitate others.

Shining in the light of others we may have made a name as great preachers; our people may have canonized us. To turn now from imitating others and become our own true selves may mean temporary failure and cannonading. Better be cannonaded for being true, than canonized for being false.

The preacher should be himself, his best self, his consecrated self, his highest self. In so doing he will best prove his sincerity, honor his God, and become a means of greatest blessing to the people to whom he ministers.

2. He Should Be a Man of Deep Piety.

Again and again, in his letters to Timothy, the young preacher, the aged Apostle Paul insists on purity and piety of life. The great, and ofttimes the only difference in many sermons is simply the difference in the character of the preachers. To know the inner life of such men as Spurgeon, Moody or Finney is to understand the secret of their powerful ministry. What we are does indeed speak louder than what we say and certainly, in the long run, is more effective. A bad man cannot long remain undiscovered in the ministry. If the preacher is not living up to his preaching, the people will soon find it out—then woe be to that man. "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord."

The preacher must be clean in the habits of his life. Little foxes spoil the vines. He must have no impure habits, nor secret vices. He who sins secretly, God will put to shame openly. David's life is an illustration of this truth (2 Samuel 12:12). Paul's exhortation to Timothy is still a helpful one: "Flee youthful lusts." The preacher will be shorn of his power in the pulpit if he is not clean in his private life. He cannot face his people with confidence if he knows that his life is not pure as it ought to be. The very confidence of the people will rebuke his hypocrisy. The preacher must cleanse

himself from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. If a man shall purge himself, he shall be a vessel unto honor, meet and prepared for the Master's use.

The preacher must also be truthful. Exaggeration is lying; stretching the truth is lying, and a lie in the pulpit is worse than a lie anywhere else. "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"—and, certainly, this includes lying preachers. If an illustration which you are using did not occur in your own life, then do not say it did. How many a preacher has been conscious, while in the pulpit, that the story he was telling was not true, that he was exaggerating, yes, that he was actually lying. We must not do evil that good may come from it.

A preacher's life may be a lie; he may be pretending to be in life what he is not in reality. Piety in the pulpit must be accompanied by piety in the home. A certain quality of life is expected from the preacher by his people, and reasonably so too; he must see to it that he proves himself worthy of their confidence. We must tell the truth to God. If we have vowed to Him, let us keep our vows. We must tell the truth to men. If we have promised to meet an obligation on a certain day, let us meet it, and if, at the proper time we are unable to meet it, let us be men, and go and confess our inability to do so.

3. He Must Be a Man of Gravity.

He should consider whose servant he is, and what court he represents. A clerical jester is sadly out of place both in the pulpit and out of it. There should be a difference between a cheap advertising medium for a circus and an ambassador from the court of heaven. It is to be feared that some preachers grieve the Holy Spirit more by foolish talking and jesting than by any-

thing else. If our strength has departed from us and we wist not the reason why, let us examine ourselves with this thought in mind.

4. He Must Take Care of His Bodily Health.

Ordinarily a man must be a good animal before he can be a good preacher. The preacher should be his best self physically. A good physique is an attraction in the pulpit, as well as the basis for good spiritual enjoyment. Spirituality and dyspepsia are very seldom found in the same individual at the same time. Exercise; take care of your health; look well to your diet—there are many spiritual enemies that cannot be cast out "save by prayer and fasting." A change of diet is the first thing some Christians need to attend to in order to their progress in sanctification. The Apostle Paul says, "Bodily exercise is profitable," therefore take exercise.

CHAPTER III

THE TEXT—ITS CHOICE

CHAPTER III.

THE TEXT—ITS CHOICE.

I. DEFINITION.

The word *text* is from the Latin *textus* or *textum,* and signifies something woven or spun. It is, therefore, that out of which the sermon is woven, the basis of the sermon or discourse. The text is not to be a mere motto for a sermon, nor is it to be chosen after the theme or subject is chosen, and the sermon finished. If the sermon is not to be woven from the text, then do not take a text, or pretend to do so. If you choose a text, let it be a text and not a *pre*-text. Sometimes texts are too apt to be "points of departure" for a sermon.

Shall Texts Be Long or Short?

The answer to this question depends upon circumstances and usage. We are told that the early Christians chose long texts. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries short texts were popular. Nowadays the tendency seems to be towards the choice of long texts. The popular preaching promises to be expository preaching.

II. THE CHOICE OF A TEXT.

The importance of the right choice of the text upon which the sermon is based should not be underestimated. A young preacher, on asking what text he should choose for a sermon, was answered, "Oh, any text will do; speak on the Medes, Persians, Elamites, and the dwell-

ers in Mesopotamia." This was certainly fatal advice to give to any young preacher.

The choice of a right text is often a difficult task for the preacher. No one better than he knows how nerve-wrecking it is to have Saturday come and yet not have found a text for the coming Sunday sermon. And ofttimes, when a text is chosen under such conditions, it is more of a pre-text than a text.

Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopalian preachers have a great advantage over preachers of other denominations in that their texts have already been chosen for them by the Church. By reason of the *Pericopes,* and Gospel and Epistle lessons for the year, as found in the prayer books of these churches, they are saved the trouble of searching for texts. The Scripture lessons and the texts for the sermons are already mapped out for them. It may be that this is a good thing for the preacher, and, doubtless, it has many commendable qualities. While, at times, if considered an iron-clad rule, it may seem arbitrary and binding, and cause a man to preach on a subject with which, for the time being at least, he is not in sympathy, yet, on the other hand, it settles the mind, and allows the preacher to quietly and calmly be gathering material for his sermon all the time. He is thus saved many a sleepless night.

III. THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A TEXT.

There certainly are advantages accruing from having an aptly chosen text, and they are many and important. Textless preachers are great losers in the matter of effective preaching.

1. It Awakens the Interest of the Audience.

This is by no means an advantage to be ignored. To pass it by is fatal to the preacher. How many times,

as we have listened to a preacher announce his text, and our attention has been aroused by the very reading of it, have we said within ourselves, "I wonder what the preacher is going to get out of that text?" Thus at the outset has our interest and attention been secured. To be able to secure this state of mind in the audience is of great advantage to the preacher. He can well afford to give diligent attention to whatever will produce this result.

2. It Gains the Confidence of the Audience.

Confidence—in that you are to proclaim to the people the Word of God and not your own opinions. To many people the Word of God is—to everyone it should be—an end to all controversy.

3. It Gives the Preacher Authority and Boldness in the Proclamation of His Message.

He need speak in no vacillating, or uncertain tone. With a "Thus saith the Lord" as the basis of his sermon, he may speak with the authority of heaven, for, after all, it is God and not man who speaks from the text. With such an authoritative message no preacher need be timid about proclaiming the will of God. A timid preacher is a caricature, and useless in the pulpit. To be sure that one has a direct message from God gives the messenger a sense of authority and holy boldness.

4. It Will Keep the Preacher from Mind-wandering.

As any preacher, or any audience, for that matter, well knows, this is something greatly to be desired. Some preachers are like boys swimming under water: you see them when they dive off the text, and then you see them when they bob up again at the "Amen"; but all

through the sermon you lose sight of them because they have gone in over their heads. The text is a good thing with which to round a man up and bring him back from his wanderings. It constantly arouses the query, "Am I keeping to my text?"

5. It Will Keep the Preacher Biblical.

This is a valuable thing in itself. There is not very much danger of running away from the Scriptures if you stick closely to the exposition of the text. If ever there was a time when biblical preachers are needed it is now.

IV. THE PRINCIPLES WHICH GOVERN THE CHOICE OF A TEXT.

Phillips Brooks well said: "The ease and facility with which a text is chosen depends upon two things: the preacher's own mind, and the idea of a sermon." If the preacher's own mind is barren and sterile; if it is not fertile by being rooted in the Word of God; if, because of not bathing the heart in the laver of the Word the mind is dry and unspiritual, then, the choosing of a text will be a difficult task. If, on the contrary, the mind and soul of the preacher is being continually steeped in the Word of truth; and, if there is a daily walk and fellowship with God, then, it will be a comparatively easy matter to find a text from which to proclaim God's message to a hungry world. Then again, if the minister has the idea that a sermon is a stilted affair, a great oration, an extraordinary deliverance, instead of a message from God through the life of the preacher to the hearts of men—a message straight from the preacher's heart to the hearer's soul—then it will indeed be a difficult task to choose the proper text.

And, after all, what is a great sermon? We often hear it said—probably because of such stilted ideas as to the nature of a sermon—that it is hard for any pastor to preach two *strong* sermons each Sunday. What is a great or a strong sermon? Certainly a sermon that accomplishes the desired result is a strong sermon. That a man cannot preach two such sermons each Sunday is born of a wrong conception as to what a sermon should be. Sermons ought to be messages straight from the heart of the preacher to the soul of the hearer. A minister is a man who is supposed by the people to whom he ministers to have been in communion and fellowship with God all through the week in a sense in which it has not been possible for them to be, and that his messages on Sunday are to be to them the expression of what he has gathered from such communion and fellowship with God. Is it not strange that, after a week of such fellowship, a man should be able to deliver but a weak sermon on a Sunday evening?

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

1. A Careful Consideration of the Spiritual Needs of the People to Whom One is Ministering.

Study your people. Consider their needs—physical, mental, moral, spiritual. Ask yourself what you have found out about their needs as the result of your visitation among them. Gather, in your imagination, the people around your desk as you consider what to preach about, and let their needs determine what shall be the nature of your text and sermon. The preacher who is thus led will not fail to preach helpful sermons; doubtless, he will often have his people say to him, "Pastor, your sermon has helped me; and I want to thank you for it."

2. There Should Be a Careful Consideration of the Cycle of Truth Preached.

You must ask yourself, "On what themes have I been preaching lately? Have I omitted any of the great doctrines of the Scripture? Has my preaching been symmetrical, and has it included the whole counsel of God?" The choice of a text and a subject is not something that can be left to chance or to the whim of the preacher. The entire cycle of what you have preached upon before must be considered. For this reason it is a good thing for the preacher to draw up at the beginning of the year a list of the subjects upon which he intends to preach during that year.

The Episcopal and Lutheran churches in arranging the gospel lessons which form the texts from which their ministers preach, divide the church year into two great parts: justification,—what Christ has done *for* us; sanctification,—what Christ does *in* us. Thus, beginning with the advent and concluding with the second coming of Christ, the whole cycle of truth is covered. Is there not a lesson for preachers of other denominations to learn from this arrangement? We shall, at least, thus be saved from being faddists or hobbyists in our preaching.

3. One's Ability to Deal With the Text and the Subject Derived from it Must Be Taken into Consideration.

It is not well for David to go to battle in Saul's armor. We must not choose subjects that are above and beyond our ability to handle. Little ships must keep near to the shore else they will be wrecked. This does not mean that we must never handle subjects that are in advance of our present educational attainments, for then there would be no growth in our experience or

preaching. It does mean, however, that before we preach on a subject we shall understand clearly for ourselves whatever phase of it we may present. It is well for the young preacher to avoid controversial themes.

Remember then, these three general principles when choosing a text: the cycle of truth preached; the needs of the people, and one's own ability to present the subject.

PARTICULAR PRINCIPLES:

1. The Constant Reading of the Word of God.

Study your Bible; it is the great quarry of the preacher. The Bible is not merely a text-book, it is a book of texts. Therefore let there be a constant reading of the Scriptures. "It (the Bible) contains the truths we have to teach, the laws which we have to illustrate in their relations to the lives of our people, the divine promises by which we are to console them when in trouble and to strengthen their faith in the love and power of God."—*Dale.*

2. The Use of a Note-book.

Read with a note-book at your hand. Whenever any thought, illustration, or argument impresses you, make a note of it. An hour's reading will often furnish suggestive material for two or three sermons. Again, you will find in your reading of the Scripture that a certain text will impress itself upon your mind very vividly. Indeed, an outline of the theme suggested by the text may loom up before you. If so, then write down the text and the thoughts that have thus associated themselves with it. Some day when it is difficult to find a text one need only turn to the note-book, and there one may be found already suggestively outlined. Jot down important thoughts as they come to you. Make a note

not merely of the reference to the page or location, but work out the headings with the thoughts that suggest themselves to you at the time. Work out the outline there and then. At some future time when you feel barren you may draw on this fresh manna. In this way you will have a constant supply of raw material. The preachers who form and keep up this habit are never at a loss for material.

3. Read Suggestive Books.

Read them not to copy and adopt, but to inspire and adapt. Read them as a tonic for the mind. Reading good books acts as water poured down a dry pump—it primes and has a reactionary effect. Read the lives of great preachers, missionaries, reformers, etc. The study of biography is a great inspiration to the preacher.

4. Seek the Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Then, as Spurgeon so cleverly said, "You can say truly what Jacob said falsely, 'The Lord hath brought it to me.' While other men, as Esau, may be hunting for their sermon material or texts in the distant places, you, by the help of the Spirit, may find the savory morsel right close to home." The man who is continually living under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit will scarcely ever be at a loss for something to preach about.

V. CERTAIN PRECAUTIONS NECESSARY IN THE CHOICE OF TEXTS.

1. We Need to Be Warned Against the Choosing of Odd Texts.

A few illustrations will explain what is meant. A minister preached a sermon to a number of tailors, and took for his text: "A remnant shall be saved." Another,

addressing an audience of newspaper reporters, took for his text the words: "And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press." An English minister, addressing a bench of English judges, based his remarks on the text: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." A young Episcopal clergyman made himself ridiculous in the eyes of his congregation by preaching, on a certain Ash Wednesday, from the text: "I have eaten ashes like bread." Other illustrations are the following: "Take it by the tail" (Exodus 4:4); "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?"

A sermon aimed against women coiling their hair on the top of their heads, had as its text the words: "Top-(k)not come down," a gross violation of both the grammar and sense of the Scripture as found in Matthew 24: "Let him which is on the house-top not come down." It is recorded that a minister preached eleven sermons on the letter "O."

"Such texts," says Joseph Parker, "may please the idle-minded and vain, but will distress all who come to worship God and receive His message at the preacher's lips. Have you any particular sermons on striking texts? Take a friend's advice and burn them." "When I hear a man announce a text of this sort and watch the process by which he develops from it the doctrine of justification by faith, or the necessity of regeneration, or a theory of divine providence, or some interesting speculations on the millennium or the future blessedness of the righteous, I always think of the tricks of those ingenious gentlemen who entertain the public by rubbing a sovereign between their hands until it becomes a canary, and drawing out of their coat sleeves half a dozen brilliant glass globes filled with water, and with four or five gold fish swimming in each of them. For myself I like to listen to a good preacher, and I have no objection in the world to be amused by the tricks of a clever

conjurer; but I prefer to keep the conjuring and the preaching separate: conjuring on Sunday morning, conjuring in the church, conjuring with texts of Scripture, is not quite to my taste. When the text is only a deceptive signal, or when a steeple surmounts a play house, it would doubtless be better to remove the signal and throw down the steeple."—*Dale.*

2. Do Not Choose a Text Which, in View of the Surrounding Circumstances, Will Make it Appear Ludicrous and Ridiculous.

The feature of such blunders which is especially bad is that associations clinging to a passage of Scripture may be of such a character that its repetition shall ever after occasion a smile, even in the house of God. For this reason we hesitate to give the reader the following illustrations, and do so only to leave a deeper impression touching the dangers to which preachers are unfortunately exposed.

A minister upon the first visit after his marriage to the home of his bride, surprised and convulsed with laughter the congregation by announcing for his text, "Oh that I were as in months past." A preacher of ponderous physical proportions, with a corresponding ponderous manuscript, which he placed on the desk after having piled thereon two Bibles, and several hymn books, rose to his full height, took a long breath and read for his text the words:—"Thou shalt see greater things than these." An extremely corpulent clergyman announced for his text, "If any man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more."

3. Do Not Choose Texts that Create Expectations Which Neither the Sermon Nor the Preacher Can Fulfill.

Young preachers, for instance, should hesitate before preaching on such themes as, "The glory of heaven";

"And there was a rainbow round about the throne"; "We all do fade as a leaf"; "And the streets of the city were of pure gold"; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard"; (What, then, is the use of trying to picture it?) But, we may ask, what shall we do with such texts? Shall we ignore them altogether? By no means. Take a more simple text and weave these grand thoughts into the sermon.

4. Do Not Choose Questionable Texts.

John 9:31 furnishes a good example: "We know that God heareth not sinners." These words, spoken by the blind man, can hardly be true for God does hear sinners (the publican in the temple, for instance).

Care should be exercised with reference to the choosing of texts from the books of Job and Ecclesiastes. The purpose of the book, and the character of the spokesman should be taken into consideration, also the analogy of faith.

5. Do Not Use Mutilated Texts.

It is neither wise nor right to use as texts for sermons such passages as only partly express the mind and sense of the writer, e. g., "All men are liars"; "There is no God"; "John the Baptist is risen from the dead." A half truth is worse than a lie. Dr. A. T. Pierson says: "Satan's first lie was a half truth. He told our first parents that to eat the forbidden fruit would open their eyes, and it did, but it was to see themselves sinners; he said they would know both good and evil, and so they did; but how much better it would have been to know only good! He said they should not, in the day they ate, surely die; and they did not, in the low sense of physical death, though they did die to God's favor and sympathy. Satan's favorite device for deluding and destroying souls is to use half truths."

Let preachers beware lest they fall into this snare of the devil.

6. Old Testament Texts Should Not Be Neglected.

The Old Testament as well as the New is the inspired Word of God. "All Scripture * * * * is profitable" for the preacher to choose his texts from. The Old Testament as well as the New instructs in righteousness, and should not, therefore, be neglected, even though the New Testament may yield the richer sermonic treasures.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEXT—ITS INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER IV.

The Text—Its Interpretation.

I. RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF A TEXT.*

There must be due recognition of the rules that determine the meaning of the text which is to form the basis of a sermon. The rules are as follows:

1. Ascertain Whether the Language of the Text is Literal or Figurative.

Usually the Bible interprets its own terms, and, by means of the context, as a rule informs the reader whether the language used is to be taken in a literal sense or not. This cannot be accomplished by intellectual science alone. Judgment and good faith, critical tact and impartiality are also necessary. It is necessary to examine the passage in all its details, critically, exegetically, and faithfully. The figurative sense must be sustained by all these processes before it can be relied upon as the true interpretation.

Our Saviour spoke in figurative language when He said to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." How do we know this language is figurative? In this instance the narrator says so (cf. John 2:19, 21, 22).

So with Matthew 26:26, 27; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, in which reference is

*See *The Book of Books*, by same author.

made to the elements used in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is not literally Jesus' flesh and blood which are spoken of in these passages, but of His flesh and blood represented under the figure of bread and wine.

The words "washing" and "wash" are often used figuratively as well as literally in the Bible. When Naaman was told to "wash in Jordan seven times," it is impossible not to see that the word is to be taken in its literal sense; but when, as in 1 Corinthians 6:11, believing Christians are spoken of as being "washed," it is equally manifest that the word is used figuratively, and that they are washed in the sense of being cleansed from their sin and released from its consequences by the saving efficacy of the blood of Christ.

The literal language of Scripture is to be preferred, unless otherwise demanded by the context, parallel passages, or analogy. Apply the simple rules of grammar, as directed by a wide-awake common sense, and take for granted that the Bible means just what it says. True, we are warned that the letter killeth, and the spirit giveth life; but we are also told that every jot and tittle of the law is to be fulfilled. It is better to be unyieldingly literal than to adopt rationalistic interpretations of the gospel that make the Word of God of none effect. But we need the twofold caution: neither to add nor to take from, especially not to put into the Bible a doctrine that is not there. To find out just what the Bible says will require close study.

2. Ascertain the Meaning of Words as Used by Each Writer of the Scriptures.

All the writers do not give the same word exactly the same meaning. The usage of the writer and the connection in which it is used must determine the meaning of the particular word.

Take the word "faith" as an example. In Galatians 1:23; 1 Timothy 3:9; 4:1; Acts 24:24 it means the gospel of which faith in Christ is the great doctrine. In Romans 3:3 it means truth or faithfulness—the fidelity of God in keeping His word. In Acts 17:31 it means proof or evidence. In Romans 14:23 it means a conscientious conviction of duty.

Again, take the word "flesh." In Ezekiel 11:19 it is used in contrast to stone. In John 1:14; Romans 1:3; 9:3 it refers to human nature without any reference to sinfulness. In Romans 8:13 and Ephesians 2:3 it points to human nature as both sinful and corrupt.

So is it with the word "salvation." In Exodus 14:13 it means outward safety and deliverance; in James 5:15 bodily healing; in Romans 13:11 the whole of the blessing which Christ has secured for believers. Sometimes it means simply the gospel, as in Hebrews 2:3.

a) Sometimes the sense in which the word is used is made known or defined by the writer himself.

In Hebrews 11, for instance, "faith" is first defined and then illustrated. It is said to be a confident expectation of things hoped for, a perfect persuasion of things not seen; and then examples are given of both parts of this definition.

The word "perfection"—over which so many are stumbling in this day—is clearly defined in the several parts of the Bible. In Psalms 37:37 it is used as being synonymous even with uprightness or sincerity, a real, unfeigned goodness, in opposition to sham goodness; and this is doubtless its real meaning in the Old Testament (1 Chronicles 12:33, 38). In the New Testament it means either the possession of clear and accurate knowledge of divine truth, or the possession of *all* the graces of Christian character in a higher or lower degree. The first is the meaning in Hebrews 5:14; 1 Corinthians 2:6; Philippians 3:15. The second is the meaning in James

1:4, R. V., where the word is defined as "entire, lacking nothing." In 2 Peter 1:5-7 the graces which characterize the perfect Christian are enumerated.

b) Sometimes words are to be understood, according to the context, to mean the very opposite of their usual sense.

In 1 Kings 22:15, "Go, and prosper" was spoken ironically, and meant the very reverse.

In Numbers 22:20 "Rise up, and go" appears from verses 12 and 32 to mean, "If, after all I have told you, your heart is set on violating My command, do it at your own risk."

The use of this form of speech may also be seen in 1 Kings 18:27; Judges 10:14; Mark 7:9; 1 Corinthians 4:8.

3. The Circumstances Peculiar to the Writer and Those Written to Must Be Taken into Consideration.

We should be more likely to translate literally what we find in the historical books than what we find in the poetical books. We should be more likely to emphasize chronology than the details of parables.

The student of the Scriptures must become well acquainted with the individuality of each writer, his style and mode of expression.

Under what circumstances were the words written, what the character of the people to whom they were addressed, and what state of moral sentiment prevailed at the time of writing? These, and other circumstances peculiar to each book and author, we must take cognizance of if we would become true and safe interpreters of the Bible.

4. The Analogy of Faith (Romans 12:6).

This term means the comparing of scripture with scripture in order to arrive at its true meaning. It at

once recognizes a divine unity running through the Scriptures, and is a proof of its inspiration.

The analogy of faith is identical with the phrase, "the whole tenor of Scripture." It is a gathering together of all the passages bearing upon any one subject and comparing them the one with the other, thereby arriving at the teaching of "the whole Scripture" on that given subject. If, for example, an expositor were to speak of justification by faith as though it freed us from obligation to holiness, such an interpretation must be rejected, because it contradicts the main design and spirit of the gospel.

In Proverbs 16:4 it is said, "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The doctrine that the wicked were created that they might be condemned, which some have founded upon this passage, is inconsistent with innumerable parts of Scripture, and therefore cannot be true (see Psalm 145:9; Ezekiel 18:23; 2 Peter 3:9). The meaning, as determined by the analogy of faith, is that all evil shall contribute to the glory of God and promote the accomplishment of His adorable designs.

"The Scriptures being composed of several obscure texts of Scripture mingled with clear ones," said Boyle (1627-1691), "many devout persons have rather chosen to read other books, which, being free from difficulties, might promise more instruction; but as the moon, notwithstanding her spots, gives more light than the stars that are luminous, so the Scripture, notwithstanding its dark passages will afford a Christian more light than the best authors." "Make the Word of God as much as possible its own interpreter. You will best understand the Word of God by comparing it with itself, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual.'"—*Bishop Newton.*

Thus we see that devout Christian men of all ages have been impressed with the necessity of reading the Word of God reverently, and comparing scripture with scripture.

5. A Knowledge of the Manners and Customs of the People to Whom the Bible Was Originally Written, is a Great Aid to the Student in its Interpretation.*

The houses of the poor in the east were generally made of mud, and thus become fitting images of the frailty of human life. This fact helps us to understand such passages as Job 24:16; Ezekiel 12:5, and Matthew 6:19.

The houses of the rich were of a more elaborate order, comprising porches, porticos, waiting-rooms, guest-chambers. The roof was flat, surrounded by a battlement of breastwork. In summer the people slept on the roof, and at all times it was used as a place of prayer and devotion. These facts explain the following and many other passages: Deuteronomy 22:8; 1 Samuel 9:25; 2 Samuel 11:2; Isaiah 22:1; Acts 10:9; Mark 13:15, and 2:4.

The dress of the Jews consisted commonly of two garments: the one a close-bodied frock or shirt, generally with long sleeves, and reaching a little below the knee, and later to the ankle, and the other a loose robe of some yards in length, fastened over the shoulders and thrown around the body. Within doors the first dress only was worn. It was regarded, however, as a kind of undress, in which it was not usual to pay visits, or to walk out. Hence persons clothed in it alone are said in Scripture to be naked (Isaiah 20:2-4; John 13:4 and 21:7), or to have laid aside their garments.

*See Bissell's *Biblical Antiquities.*

II. THE SOURCES OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT.

The sources of interpretation are four, viz.: The text, the context, parallel passages, and resources outside of the text. It is absolutely necessary that these be taken into consideration by the student. In no other way can a correct exegesis of any portion of the sacred writings be obtained.

1. The Text Itself.

The first thing to be done in the study of any text is to find out what the text itself really teaches.

In this connection a knowledge of the *original languages* of the Bible is found exceedingly valuable. It affords the student an opportunity of ascertaining the various shades of meaning which are impossible to find in a translation. If you can, then, study the text in the language in which it was originally written. Find out the exact meaning of each word, phrase, and sentence. Let there be no hurry or haste in the matter. Such diligent and thorough study of the text you owe to God, to the Scriptures, to yourself, and to the people to whom you minister.

The student who is not able to read the text in the original need not therefore despair of being able to ascertain its true meaning, for the Revised Version comes to his help. In spite of its inconsistencies this version is beyond question a very good translation. Study the text in the Revised as well as in the Authorized Version. A comparison of 1 Thessalonians 4:15 in the Authorized and Revised Versions will illustrate the advantage of the latter. The word "prevent" in the Authorized is translated (correctly) "precede" in the Revised Version. The word originally meant "to go before," but words some-

times become obsolete or change their meaning. Here is an illustration of the latter.

In our search for truth we should not be on the lookout for the brilliant and ingenious, but for the true. Nor should we sacrifice truth for brilliancy or for the sake of making an impression. We must not juggle with the Scriptures. In all things it behooves us as students and teachers to rightly divide the Word of truth.

One ought to remember also in this connection that invaluable help in the study of the text is to be found in the similarity between the Old and New Testament language of the same text. See and compare Psalm 8:3-8, with Hebrews 2:5-8.

For helps to the study of the *text itself* the use of grammatical concordances, such as Young's *Analytical*, and Strong's *Exhaustive Concordances*, and of grammatical commentaries, such as Jamieson, Fausset and Brown; Meyer; and Godet, are suggested.

2. The Context.

By the context is meant what goes before and what follows after the special portion of the sacred text under consideration.

To find the real context of a passage one may have to go back one or more chapters. Take, as an illustration, the seventh chapter of Romans. Before this chapter can be correctly interpretated it is necessary to go back to chapter one and grasp the thought of the whole book.

Another passage worth noticing is 2 Timothy 3:16. This verse is constantly quoted as a proof text for the inspiration of the whole Bible. It concerns the Old Testament only, the New Testament not as yet being written. It does announce the great truth that the Old Testament is inspired of God. We must look to other sources for proof of the inspiration of the New Testament.

Many interpreters neglect the context. They snatch a word out of its connection, and thus get a distorted view of scriptural teaching. Some time ago a sermon was preached on the text Hebrews 7:25. The preacher in a very brilliant manner sought to show the power of Christ to save the lowest and most degraded of sinners. Especially did he emphasize the word "uttermost" to prove the power of Christ. Now, this text does not prove Christ's ability to save sinners of the worst kind, although many other passages do (e. g., 1 Timothy 1:15; Luke 19:10, and Isaiah 1:18). Had the preacher read the context carefully he would not have chosen this passage as the text for such a theme. The context shows that this passage sets forth the difference between the priesthood of Christ and that of the Levites; they, by reason of death, could minister but temporarily; He, by reason of His ever living, is able to save (or minister) *for evermore*. The word "uttermost" is best translated "completely." The context demands such a translation (see R. V., margin).

Study the context. Read carefully what *goes before* and what *comes after* the passage you are seeking to expound. See also Matthew 5:48 (p. 80, *c*) and Hebrew 6:1.

3. The Use of Parallel Passages.

"Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments. It should be a rule with everyone who would read the Holy Scriptures with advantage and improvement, to compare every text which may seem either important for the doctrine it may contain or remarkable for the turn of expression with the parallel passages in other parts of Holy Writ, that is, with passages in which the subject matter is the same, the sense equivalent, or the turn of expression similar."—*Horsley*. Obscure words and phrases will thus become clear and plain.

God, for example, sometimes represents Himself as giving men to drink of a cup which He holds in His hand; they take it and fall prostrate to the ground in fearful intoxication. The figure is given with much brevity and with no word of explanation in some of the prophecies (Nahum 3:11; Habakkuk 2:16; Psalms 75:8). In Isaiah 51:17-23 it is fully explained, and the meaning of the figure becomes clear.

In Mark 8:36 we have the words: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" What is meant here by the word "soul"? The study of the parallel passage in Luke 9:25 throws light on the word. It reads as follows: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose *himself*?" From these two passages we learn that "soul" and "himself" are equivalent. See and compare also Mark 11:8 with Matthew 21:8.

4. Resources Outside of the Text.

After the student has carefully and prayerfully studied the text, the context, and the parallel passages, he may safely read what other authorities have to say on the text. Cogitation first; the thoughts of others afterwards.

The resources outside of the text include commentaries, concordances, text expositions, word and subject indexes, and other library helps.

CHAPTER V

THE THEME

CHAPTER V.

THE THEME.

The wise choice and proper wording of the theme of a sermon is a matter of no small moment. The attractiveness of the title of a book is sometimes the greatest factor in its sale. While this should not be so in the case of a sermon, yet, it must be admitted that a wisely chosen theme has much to do with the interestingness of a sermon.

A few general suggestions may here be made bearing on the subject.

I. BY WAY OF SUGGESTION.

1. Know Your Theme Thoroughly.

This does not mean that you must know absolutely everything connected with the subject. It does mean, however, that the preacher must have a clear, definite, intelligent, masterly grasp of the subject. Familiarity with the theme may be secured by talking the subject over with some one. If one cannot express the theme colloquially, it is doubtful if he can do so from the pulpit.

It may be said in this connection that it is by no means always wise to preach at once upon a theme because one is deeply impressed with it at the time. One will preach better if he allows the matter to revolve more and more in his mind. Live in the theme; let it be the atmosphere which you breathe; let it master and take complete possession of you—*then* preach about it. Knowledge is

power in this as well as in all other respects. From this it may be said—preach on familiar themes, at least to begin with. This is good advice to young preachers: the older ones do not need it, they know it from experience, and ofttimes bitter experience at that.

2. Be Sure Your Theme is One That the People You Preach to Can Readily Understand.

Do not preach over people's heads. Remember that they do not live in the same kind of atmosphere that the preacher does throughout the week. What is very commonplace to him, may be quite strange to them. Hence it is not prudent to discuss from the pulpit the authorship of the Pentateuch, or whether one or two authors wrote Isaiah. The average audience is not at all interested in the discussion of such questions. The people are soul-hungry; they want bread and not stones.

How disinterested the average audience is in such themes may be seen by watching their faces. How bored they look when such abstract subjects are discussed! How bright and interested when the appeal is made to something that will help them in their every-day life!

It is not intended by these remarks that one must never preach on a theme unless the audience is familiar with it. The preacher is an educator, and as such there are times when he will find it necessary to deal with a theme which may be new and strange to the hearers. But even in such cases let the arguments, illustrations, and analogies be such as the congregation may reasonably be expected to understand.

3. Do Not Let Your Theme Be a Trivial One.

Usually one has but two sermons a week to preach, therefore, choose a theme that has weight and dignity. Read the headlines in the daily papers and learn a lesson

from them in this direction. Sermons have been preached on such themes as "The Crown of Thorns," "The Folded Napkin," "The Rainbow about the Throne," details which no doubt are interesting in themselves, but which are not in themselves big enough to constitute a sermon. These things make nice scenery, but very small subjects. It would be better to preach about the Christ who wore the crown of thorns; the resurrection, of which the folded napkin was but an incident; the Judge who sits upon the throne. The sculptors of Greece, famous in history, did not spend their time carving cherry stones; they carved Minervas, Apollos, and Jupiters. Preach on the great doctrines, the fundamentals, the stupendous truths of the Bible and our redemption. As some one has said, it is not necessary to expend consecrated energy in striking gnats with a club of Hercules.

4. Have a Definite Aim in the Treatment of Your Theme.

Do not go into the pulpit simply because it is Sunday and you are expected to deliver a message. It is not so much the question of preaching something, as preaching with a definite end and aim in view. Preach so that if anyone were to stop you in the midst of your preaching and ask you what you were aiming at, you could give a definite answer. Aim to hit something. Do not ramble here and there. Have a mark; aim at it; hit it; stop and see where the shot struck, and then fire another shot straight from the shoulder. Letters not addressed, or addressed wrongly, are sent to the dead-letter office: they are of no use to anybody. Preach for conversions, for decisions. There is too much generalized preaching nowadays—in fact, there always has been since apostolic times. A young preacher once expressed his sorrow to Mr. Spurgeon that there had been so few conversions

under his preaching. "Why," said Mr. Spurgeon, "you don't expect conversions to follow every sermon, do you?" "Oh, no, of course not," the young man replied. "Then you certainly won't have them," responded Mr. Spurgeon. One minister said to another of a newly settled metropolitan pastor, "They say he actually expects conversions at the morning service!" How would it do if this winter every evangelist and pastor were to "expect conversions in the morning," and preach with that end in view? Paul's idea of preaching was to persuade men to be reconciled to God. That seems to be a desirable end today. Let us have less firing of blank cartridges, and more shooting to kill.

5. Do Not Choose a Theme That is Not in Accord with Your Experience, and with Which You Have No Mental Sympathy.

This does not mean that one shall never preach on a theme the fullness of which he has not yet reached in his own experience. There will always be illimitable stretches in Christian experience of which we must say, "I have not yet attained," but which "I follow after." Nevertheless there are certain phases of Christian life and character, even above that attained by the average Christian, which a congregation has a right to expect from its minister.

Do not preach holiness if you are not living a holy life. If you are constantly sad, do not preach on the joy of the Lord. Be joyful; then preach about it. Do not proclaim in loud pulpit tones the blessedness of a life of victory over sin if you are not enjoying a victorious life yourself. "Physician, heal thyself." No preacher can afford to falsely impersonate. An actor may play a role, a preacher should not.

The result of such inconsistent, unsympathetic preaching will be a hardening of the preacher's heart, a blunting of his preceptions, and the cultivating of a general tone of insincerity. Hear the words of the apostle: "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?"

6. Let Your Theme be Suitable to Time, Place, and Occasion.

If it is Easter, preach on the resurrection of Christ; if Christmas, on the birth of Christ; if Passion Week, on the death of Christ. In so doing you are able to take advantage of the sentiment already existing in the minds of your people in favor of your theme. Ordinarily the preacher has to pour floods upon the dry ground of the minds of his hearers before the seed of truth can find lodgment. Recognizing these festival seasons the ground for the reception of the truth has already to a very great extent been prepared.

This conception is true also with reference to the adaptation of the truth to the various kinds of congregations to whom we may be called to minister. The truth itself does not need to be changed; merely the adaptation of it to the particular congregation. The late Dr. John Hall, of New York, is reported to have once said before a graduating class of theological students, that he preached precisely the same gospel truth to his rich and cultured congregation on Fifth Avenue, that he did to his first charge in a very rural district. Of course he presented the same truth in a form which his changed audiences could appreciate. He adopted the same truth, but adapted it to the varying conditions. The Apostle Paul presented the same truth to different auditors in different ways. For example, when speaking to the Athenian phil-

osophers, he refers to their "poets," while in speaking to a rural audience he spoke of the "fruitful harvests" God had sent them.

CHAPTER VI

SERMON MATERIAL—GATHERING IT

CHAPTER VI.

Sermon Material—Gathering It.

It is assumed, of course, that the text and theme of the sermon have already been decided upon. This being done we must now ask ourselves questions. This implies reflection. Reflect before beginning to write a single word of the sermon. And in reflecting one must value his own thought. He must be himself; insist upon himself; be willing to be himself, and believe in the worth of his own reflection. No matter what it may cost by way of self-denial and self-sacrifice one must insist on thinking for himself. To do this may lead to being cannonaded instead of being canonized by the people to whom we have been preaching other people's thoughts, and, perhaps, sermons. Do it at all cost, however; success will be the outcome. Be your own self, present your own thoughts and reflections in your preaching, shine in your own star rather than in someone else's sun. You may lose some of the popularity you have falsely made, but inevitably and ultimately you will gain your own respect and that of your audience. Many a preacher knows well what it is to have a sermon pass over him but not go through him; to have it pass over his lips, but not through his own brain and heart. Be yourself, your best self; be willing to shine in your own light rather than in the light of others. "Thou shalt not steal" is a commandment that may be broken by the appropriation or, better, the misappropriation of another man's sermon preached as though it were altogether one's own production.

I. THE GATHERING OF MATERIAL.

What are the questions that should be asked as one proceeds to prepare the sermon?

1. What Have I Ever Read on This Subject?

Gather your thoughts together. Think; and write as you think. Pay no attention to the order in which the thoughts come into the mind. Thought is of primary importance now; the order of the thought, secondary.

Some people do not have many thoughts on the particular subject because they are not readers. To be prolific in thought one must be a faithful reader. Reading makes a wise man. The constant reader will not be at a loss for thoughts. The man who does not read much will not make much of a preacher. One good sermon a day, and one good book a week, at least, ought to be the intellectual diet of every man who would be a good preacher. Not to read is to have nothing to draw from except oneself, and ofttimes one feels himself to be a dry subject indeed. Reading is a tonic; it has a reactionary effect upon the mind.

What should a man read? History, science, biography, books of scientific illustration, the daily papers, magazines. No good reading, even fiction, is to be lightly cast aside. Above all else in importance is the reading of the Bible. The reading of the Bible should not be spasmodic, but systematic and regular. To read the Bible simply for the sake of getting a text from it, and then closing it to resort to books of sermons for material, is a practice that must end disastrously for the preacher. Never, on any account, neglect the study of the Bible. Read good books, then. Cherish the companionship of great minds. Neglect not what God has said to the race through the minds and words of good and great men. He is a great

scholar indeed who thinks he can afford to dispense with reading what others have written

2. What Have I Observed That Will Throw Light on This Subject?

The preacher needs to have wide-open eyes. To have eyes and see not, ears, and hear not, is fatal to the preacher. There are men who can never see "sermons in stones, and books in running brooks" because they are used to seeing sermons in books and stones in running brooks. Said the prophet of the olden days concerning the dry and uninteresting preachers of his day: "They have seen nothing, they have no vision, and my people are perishing for the lack of preachers who have wide-open eyes and ears."

What is the difference between the man standing there in the meadow and the cow feeding by his side? In the one instance the cow has eyes and ears but sees nothing except the grass it is eating, and hears nothing but the inarticulate bellowing of the other cattle; whereas the man lifts up his eyes and sees afar off the beautiful hills and the enchanting landscape, and listens to and appreciates the babbling of the little brook that runs at his feet. Man has been endowed by the Creator with eyes to see, ears to hear, and a mind to appreciate the beauty and utility of that which surrounds him.

It is said of Henry Ward Beecher that one day he stood in front of the window of a jewelry store in Brooklyn for about one hour; then went into the store and asked the proprietor, who was a personal friend of the great preacher, to allow him to have a few jewels to take home with him for a day or two. This permission was granted. On the following Sunday the great preacher announced as his text the words: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." Those

who heard that sermon spoke of it as one of the best ever heard from the pulpit of the Plymouth Church. Beecher had eyes and saw things. Many a less observant preacher would have seen and admired and gone his way, and that would have been the end of his seeing.

How observant Christ was. His sermons abound with illustrations taken from the things He saw and heard. For example: "Behold a sower"; "Two women * * * grinding at the mill"; "Consider the lilies"; "Have ye not heard?" etc. Jesus was all the time seeing and hearing things and making use of them in His sermons.

Carry a note-book with you. Jot down the things you see and hear that impress you. Wherever you are and whatever you may be doing, keep an open eye and ear for material to use in your sermons. You will then have less need, if, indeed any, of resorting to stock illustration books. Your matter will be fresh and interesting.

An Irishman stood beholding the Niagara Falls for the first time. An American stood by his side, entranced by the greatness and grandeur of the mighty scene. "Is it not a marvelous sight?" exclaimed the American. "Faith," said the son of the Emerald Isle, "an' I see nothing to hinder it." The Irishman had eyes and ears but he neither saw nor heard. The American woman who, beholding the same wonder of nature, and on being asked what she thought of it, said, "Isn't it cute?" also lacked the powers of observation. How different with the keen business man, having the open eye and the open ear, who, when he looked at those immense falls, said, "Give me the use of those falls, and I will light the city of Buffalo and run all its machinery with its power." This man had eyes to see and ears to hear.

When riding on the street-car or the train, when walking through the woods and fields, when sailing, when participating in the social functions of life, or engaged in

the commerce of the day, see that you keep eyes and ears open for matter to illustrate and enforce truth. How many people spend hours in the woods, surrounded by all the beauty and glory of nature and yet see nothing. The poet speaks of such an one in these words:

A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.

* * *

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil, and of good,
Than all the sages can.

* * *

Therefore, as you see things with your eyes, and hear them with your ears, observe and record in a note book. At the close of each day ask yourself, "What have I learned from the things I have seen and heard today?" Do not allow one day to pass without making some record, no matter how small, of something you have observed. If you are a keen observer your sermons will show it and your audience will recognize and be profited thereby.

3. What Have I Ever Thought on This Subject?

Dr. A. T. Pierson speaks of what is called the principle of "unconscious cerebration—a process which corresponds to the incubation of an egg; the gradual and unconscious formation of an idea in the mind. You have a thought today; you make a record of it; you draw it out somewhat in a memorandum and lay it aside. A month later you take up your memorandum. The thought has unconsciously matured. You have been incubating your own conception, and it is growing towards completeness

though you have been unconscious with regard to any mental process concerning it." So a man ought to be writing down thoughts on various subjects as they come to him from time to time, and adding to them continually as they develop in his mind. Many of our best thoughts have been lost because we have failed to write them down. It is a good thing for a man to write down at least one thought a day.

"It is a wise proverb," says Watts, "among the learned, borrowed from the lips and the practice of a celebrated painter, '*Nulla dies sine linea,*' let no day pass without at least one line. It was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans, that they should every evening run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct had been, what they had done and what they had neglected; and they assured their pupils, that by this method they would make a noble progress in the path of virtue."

4. What Have I Gathered on This Subject?

A pitiable and deplorable sight it is to see a minister a day or two before the week's end fuming and fretting about his sermon for the coming Sunday. Friday has come and he has scarcely a single thought on the subject of his Sunday sermon. He has now to begin to create all new material for the sermon. It is nothing short of a disgrace for any minister to have to create weekly all the matter for each sermon he prepares. It indicates that he has not been in the habit of preserving the results of his reading, observation, and meditation. He has been treating his mind as a sieve—allowing every thought to pass through it. Or it may be that he has overburdened his memory by committing to it impossible and, in this day of filing devices, unnecessary tasks.

Not long ago a minister came into a fellow-minister's

study in a state of great perplexity. Said he: "I have to deliver an address on Washington, before a large assembly within a few days, and, I regret to say, I cannot lay my hand on any material for the address. I am sure I have material somewhere in my library on this theme, but just where I do not know. I am almost distracted; can you help me?" Here was a preacher, and supposed therefore to be constantly reading, observing, meditating, with eyes, ears, hands, pen and paper, and yet had gathered nothing in all the years on such an important personage as George Washington. It was not that he had not read, or heard many things in connection with this great historical character, for he had; the trouble was that he had not preserved the results of years and put it away in such shape and manner as to lay hands on it whenever needed. For this state of affairs, it seems there is absolutely no excuse. Said his colleague to him: "My friend, do you see that index filing cabinet yonder? Well, just stoop down, put your hand on the envelope marked 'Wa,' take it home with you, and you will find material enough there to make six addresses on Washington."

When we remember that a man's future success may depend upon one address, and that he may be called upon to deliver that address at a few hours' notice for preparation, does it not seem utter folly to neglect the proper classification and filing away of the material he may gather each day from reading and observation?

The preacher must be gathering constantly. The danger of gathering only at the time of preparing the sermon is, that the preacher will possess and the people will receive only half-digested thoughts. How many a preacher, reading over a sermon preached a few months, or perhaps only a few weeks before, has found himself saying, "Well, did I say that? Did I really give

expression to that thought? Did I really teach that truth? I did not know I ever preached that." Thus, you see, the thoughts preached have gone over the lips of the preacher, but not through his heart and mind. They were not really his. Many a minister's sermons are scattered over with thoughts he possessed but for a moment. The good preacher will be gathering material for his sermons all the time, and will file it away daily for future use.

After all, the preacher's main business is not to preach sermons; it is to gather and proclaim truth. Therefore the preacher's whole life should be spent in seeking for truth for truth's sake, and not for the mere sake of sermon preparation. Learn to gather your material before you undertake the preparation of your sermon. Does a builder quarry the needed stones during the process of building, putting one stone into place, and then go away to quarry, cut and shape another, and so on? No; he sees to it that the material he needs is on the ground before the building is commenced, or at least he has made such provision that the material will be on hand just when he needs it for its proper place in the structure he is erecting. And is it not true that the more material you have on hand and laid out before you when you are about to begin the preparation of your sermon, the greater the choice of material to be used will be at your disposal? And will not your sermon preparation be facilitated thereby? The less of "special" reading and preparation there is for each sermon the better.

CHAPTER VII

SERMON MATERIAL—ARRANGING IT

CHAPTER VII.

Sermon Material—Arranging It.

There should be no question as to the great importance of a proper arrangement of the sermon material. Very often the only difference between a sermon great in power and one lacking in power is a difference in the arrangement. Some sermons remind us of the account of the dawn of creation as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis—"without form, and void." The story is told of an old man who was a regular church attendant, and who always pitched the tunes at prayer-meeting. The hymn-book used contained the words of the hymns but not the music. This regular attendant was depended upon to start the hymn. One night one of the elders gave out a new hymn; he said it was a beautiful hymn, and he wished they could sing it. The old chorister called out, "What is the metre, brother?" The elder replied, "It ain't got no metre." And about as much can be said of many a sermon—it is minus arrangement.

Lack of, and carelessness in the matter of arrangement is one of the most common faults of preaching today. It ought to be considered inexcusable because it implies a lack of labor, and an unwillingness to spend time on the sermon. Laziness is a sin that many preachers need to repent of and forsake.

Rousseau said that when writing a love-letter, "you should begin without knowing what you are going to say, and end without knowing what you have said." This may be good advice as to the writing of love-letters but

it is certainly fatal advice when applied to sermon preparation.

The preacher is somewhat of an architect: it is his business to erect a structure out of the material he has on hand. Out of the same material can be built a prison, a stable, a mansion, or a palace. Which shall be built depends altogether on the arrangement of the material. The preacher may also be likened to an army general who distributes his regiments in different places but with one objective point. The preacher ought to arrange his material so that it will all converge to the one main purpose of the sermon. To some men the matter of arrangement comes somewhat natural; to others, and possibly to most, it is the result of hard work. At any rate and at any cost every preacher ought to seek to excel in the arrangement of sermon material.

I. THERE ARE CERTAIN ADVANTAGES IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF SERMON MATERIAL.

1. To the Preacher.

It is of great advantage to the preacher himself. Clear arrangement involves clearly defined thought, and yields a clear grasp of the subject.

Many preachers have great difficulty in memorizing their sermon notes. The reason for this lies in the fact that the notes lack arrangement. Whatever is clearly and logically arranged is easy to memorize—at least very much easier than matter that is without form or order.

2. To the Sermon.

It matters a great deal as to the effectiveness of a sermon whether or not it is clearly thought out in the mind of the preacher. If a subject is misty and hazy in the

preacher's mind and disorderly in arrangement in the sermon notes it is almost an impossibility and requires a miracle of grace for the audience to get a clear grasp of the subject.

3. To the Audience.

The audience is a great factor to consider in the matter of sermonizing. Whatever makes it easy for a congregation to remember and carry away the general plan and outline and consequently much of the matter of a sermon, is something not to be neglected by the preacher and is worth his constant toil to attain. It is absolutely certain that the average audience can carry away a sermon that is well planned and arranged a thousand times better than one that is poorly arranged, or has no arrangement at all. Good arrangement on the part of the preacher is absolutely necessary for good following on the part of the audience. Many an audience can truthfully say to the preacher: "We know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way." The preacher may imitate Abraham, who went out not knowing whither he went. But Abraham had a command for such conduct; the preacher has not. How often we hear this remark at the close of a sermon: "Oh, but we had a fine sermon today. I do not believe I ever heard a finer one." "Indeed," says the other, "and what were the leading thoughts of the great sermon you heard?" "Oh, well," replies the first speaker, "I cannot tell you just what the chief points were, but it was a great sermon." Is not such a confession very often an indication of the lack of sermon arrangement on the part of the preacher? Specific thoughts were not clearly defined, consequently the hearer was not able to clearly define either the thoughts of the sermon, or the duty that should arise therefrom. The result of

the sermon is, therefore, evanescent; it soon passes away and the place thereof knows it no more.

4. To the Theme.

Is there not something due the theme or subject of the sermon in this matter of arrangement? Does not the theme cry out against injustice in this direction? Does it not rebel against chaotic treatment? Does it not demand that in order to be pleasing and convincing, and remembered by the audience, that the material be arranged so as to bring about these desirable results? Assuredly it does.

II. CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES OF A GOOD ARRANGEMENT.

1. One Theme.

One of the first lessons the preacher should learn is the importance of concentrating upon one theme in his sermon. It can justly be said of many sermons that they are composed of a series of homilies on various subjects. This is evident from the fact that a preacher, after he has been in the ministry some years, can examine his first sermons and find material enough in any one of them for four or five sermons on altogether different subjects. Herein lies a danger that besets expository preaching which must be constantly guarded against. Have but one theme in your sermon and concentrate all your argument, proof, testimony, illustration, etc., towards the enforcing of that theme. If you find yourself wandering from the path of your stated theme, bring yourself back to it. At all costs do it. Disobedience to this law is practically death to effectiveness in preaching. The exceptions to this rule are not numerous enough to invalidate it.

2. The Divisions of a Sermon Should Have a Logical Connection and Sequence the One with the Other.

It is out of place to exhort before you instruct, or to apply before you explain. First the seed, then the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Make your argument to the intellect before you appeal to the emotions and through them to the will. Let there be first the negative, then the positive; the abstract, then the concrete; the general, then the particular.

3. Remember That All Parts of a Sermon Are Not of Equal Importance as to Time or Honor.

Which line of thought shall have the most prominent place in the sermon depends altogether on the theme and purpose of the sermon. Yet all the parts of a sermon, both major and minor, must bear a symmetrical relation the one to the other and of the various parts to the whole.

III. THE ARRANGEMENT ITSELF.

It is conceded that *a sermon needs an outline* just as a man needs a skeleton. It has been said that "Sometimes Providence makes man without a bony skeleton, though even then the place is occupied by cartilage." Sometimes sermons are made without a skeleton or even a cartilage. A minister who had preached one of these sermons said to his elder, after the close of the service: "Do you know I did not know what I was to preach about when I went into the pulpit this morning." The elder was honest, and replied, "Do you know that no one knew what you had preached about when you had finished?" The preacher is dealing with the human mind and its operations are subject to immutable laws as much as the stars. Rhetoric is not a human invention for the annoyance of students.

Generally speaking, the plan of a sermon should be *easy to follow*—easy for the audience to follow particularly. Nor should it be so arranged as to become a stereotyped thing weekly. It was said of a preacher that when he had announced his first point, it was easy to tell what the remaining points were for they were always the same. The power of reserve, surprise, and unexpectedness must be manifest in the arrangement as well as in the delivery of a sermon. Outlines that are striking are easily remembered. Some preachers, for this reason, make their outline so that each general heading begins with the same word or sound. Others use the law of opposites and contrasts. A sermon preached some time ago had these headings: Theme—The Transfiguration: I. Place; II. Purpose; III. Persons; IV. Power. Another: Theme—How to Become a Christian: I. Admit; II. Commit; III. Submit; IV. Transmit.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SERMON ITSELF

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SERMON ITSELF.

A. THE INTRODUCTION.

Every good and finished sermon or address divides itself into three parts: the Introduction, the Body or Argument, and the Conclusion.

It seems natural and fitting that a sermon or address should have an introduction. Just as our acquaintance with a friend is preceded by an introduction, so ought a sermon to be introduced. An introduction to a sermon is like a porch to a house—it would look unfinished without it. It is not without significance that every well written book has its preface, and every oratorio its prelude. Abrupt beginnings are to be avoided because they are unnatural.

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, as, for instance, when all the allotted time is necessary for the development of the sermon proper, when it may be deemed best to plunge at once into the subject without any stated introduction. Again, an informal talk, such as a prayer-meeting address, may not require an introduction. As a general rule, however, it is best to introduce your subject.

I. THE PURPOSE OF AN INTRODUCTION.

Why do we need an introduction to a sermon? In answer to this question we reply:

1. To Awaken an Interest in the Theme.

It is not to be taken for granted that the people who listen to a sermon are, by virtue of that fact, interested in it. Audiences are by no means always interested. Some do not, others cannot, not a few will not manifest an interest in the theme presented. Yet, every public speaker knows that, if he is to impress the minds and hearts of his hearers with the truth of his message, he must, by all means, get them interested in what he is saying. If this interest is not secured at the outset, the probabilities are that it will not be secured at all throughout the sermon. To fail to secure the ear of your audience is to fail to secure its mind. If an interest is secured at the outset the probabilities are that it will be maintained, other things of course being equal, until the end.

A good introduction is intended to arouse such an interest. An audience will not be interested simply because the speaker says: "Now hear me," or "Give me your attention," or "Now listen." It is the business of the public speaker to present his matter so interestingly that the audience cannot help but listen and be interested. One of the purposes of an introduction, then, is to awaken the interest of the audience in your theme.

2. To Prepare the Audience for What is to Follow.

Remember, it is an introduction to your theme. We are introduced to our friends for the purpose of further acquaintance. Introductions are of value only as they lead to this end; they are not for the present moment only; they have a relation to something further on. In other words, an introduction is a means to an end.

This leads to a caution: Do not attempt to put all your sermon into the introduction. We have all, doubtless, at

some time or other, been introduced to some person who revealed his entire self in the first interview. Such people are not usually interesting. As a rule, we like to be kept anticipating for a while. Let us not make this mistake in preaching. The preacher who thrusts his sermon into his introduction is guilty of the same error. Remember then, that the introduction to a sermon or address stands in the same relation to that composition as the introduction to a friend does to further friendship—it prepares your audience for what is to follow.

II. THE SOURCES OF AN INTRODUCTION.

What are the sources of an introduction, and of what material may it be composed? We may speak of eight sources:

1. The Text.

Quite frequently the best material for an introduction will be found in the text itself.

a) *Its construction.*

If the text chosen is Ephesians 1:3-14, the theme of which is, "Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Redemption," a fitting introduction will be found in the construction of the text. Close observation will reveal the fact that this thanksgiving assumes the form of a hymn of praise to the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It will further be noticed that these verses divide themselves naturally into a hymn of three stanzas, one being associated with the person and work of each of the three persons of the Godhead, and each closing with the same doxology—"to the praise of His glory." The work of the Father is set forth in verses 3-6, ending with a doxology; the work of the Son, verses 7-12, ending with a similar doxology; and the work of the Spirit, verses 13, 14, also ending with the same doxology. It is thus

evident that an interesting introduction can be made from the construction of the text.

b) *From the general familiarity with the text on theme.*

If one desires to preach a sermon from Psalm 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," etc., he may recall to the minds of the audience how many death-beds have been lighted up with this text, and how many thousands of hearts have found divine comfort from its words in the hour of death. Thus the general familiarity with the words of the text will undoubtedly prove an interesting introduction.

c) *From the fact that your text may be quite generally misunderstood.*

This will afford you material for an introduction. A sermon preached not long ago having for its text, Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect," etc., and for its theme, "Perfection in Love," was characterized by a splendid introduction based on the fact of the misunderstanding of the text. The preacher showed that instead of being a proof-text for the much abused doctrine of sinless perfection, these words had reference only—and if not exclusively, certainly primarily—to perfection in love as shown in our attitude towards our enemies. To such perfection we may all attain. This was proven by referring to the context, (vv. 43-47) which has special reference to the Christian's treatment of his enemies.

2. The Context.

Take Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost," etc., as an example. A careful consideration of the context of this verse will reveal the fact that Christ's ability to save the greatest sinners is not the theme taught in this verse, but, on the contrary His power, by virtue of the eternity of His priesthood as

contrasted with limited life service of the Levitical priests, to finish and perfect the work already begun in the saints. Thus the context provides interesting as well as instructive material for an introduction. (See also p. 46.)

3. The Historical Setting.

An interesting introduction may be made for the theme: "The Vision of Isaiah," (Isaiah 6), by referring to the moral and political conditions of the time in which the prophet Isaiah lived (2 Chronicles 26). The principal events may be recalled: King Uzziah's wonderful reign; Isaiah's danger of attributing Israel's prosperity to the power of the king rather than to Jehovah; the pride and sin of the king; the death of the king—Isaiah's idol, and then the prophet's vision, in which he saw *also* the Lord, another and greater King, the King of Glory as supreme.

4. The Geography of the Bible.

A description of the mountain, plain, sea, or city in which the words were spoken or the event transpired forms a good introduction. Such material is helpful for sermons on such topics as the transfiguration, the temptation and death of Christ.

5. The Customs and Antiquities of the Bible.

An audience is always interested in the habits and customs of the peoples of other countries. The mode of dress, manner of living, customs of trade, habits of society, oriental marriages and funerals—these topics furnish instructive as well as interesting material for an introduction.

6. The Circumstances Peculiar to the Writer and Those Addressed.

A recent sermon on "Glimpses of Paul's Inner Life,"

based on the letter to Philemon, had as its introduction a statement of the apostle's relation to Philemon, his friend, and a slave owner. One of Philemon's slaves, Onesimus by name, had run away from his master, had heard Paul preach in Rome, was converted, and, desiring to return to his master, requested of the apostle a letter of introduction to his Christian master and Paul's friend. Thus arose the occasion of the Epistle to Philemon.

7. The Occasion.

A sermon preached at Easter could have no better introduction than one which referred to the universal commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. The same is true of Passion Week, and Christmas, or indeed any special occasion. The subject at a cottage prayer-meeting may be introduced by mention of the fact that some of the greatest spiritual movements of history had their origin in a home prayer-meeting. The value of education, or present-day advantages along educational lines would furnish fitting material for an introduction to a baccalaureate address. If addressing an open-air gathering reference may be made to the fact that Christ did most of His preaching in the open air, and presumably, secured most of His disciples through open-air preaching.

8. The Subject.

a) Its pertinency to the times.

Mention of financial panics through which the country has passed, or may now be passing through will form a good introduction to a sermon on the text: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." A great sermon on the "Instability of Earthly Things" was preached some time ago having for its introduction reference to an earthquake that had taken place in Sicily a few days

before. So recent a catastrophe made the introduction to the sermon very effective.

b) *The disadvantages which come from lack of familiarity with the subject.*

Some time ago the newspapers recorded a very sad accident that occurred to a boy. The little fellow was visiting his grandparents in a small city near to Chicago, through which the electric railway passed. The boy, coming from a rural district, and having more than once amused himself by walking along the rails of the railroad tracks, thought he would like to see how far he could walk on the third rail of the electric road. Unfortunately he was ignorant of the danger hidden in the third rail. He stepped on the rail, and the result was instant death. So ignorance of your subject, you may state, may be attended with even worse results.

c) *The advantages which come from familiarity with the text—the converse truth—will furnish material for a fitting introduction.*

d) *The utility of the subject.*

The usefulness of Ephesians 6:5-9: the relation of masters to servants, as setting forth a solution of the problems between capital and labor, may be utilized as introductory material.

III. THE PROPERTIES OF A GOOD INTRODUCTION.

NEGATIVE QUALITIES:

1. It Does Not Boast Too Much.

Some preachers promise a good deal more in the introduction to the sermon than they are able to fulfill in the sermon proper. It is not right to arouse expectations at the beginning which one is unable, in the development of the sermon, to fulfill. It is that they may not be guilty

of this fault that many preachers leave the preparation of the introduction until after the sermon proper is finished, —a suggestion that young preachers may well heed and follow.

2. It Must Not Be Too Loud, Sensational, or Emotional.

Do not begin in a loud tone of voice, or in a sensational manner. It is too soon to make an appeal to the emotions or to attempt to touch the sympathetic chord. Begin by speaking slowly and in a low tone of voice; and warm up to your subject gradually; then work up to a climax.

3. It Must Not Be Too Long.

When, on opening a book, one is confronted with a preface covering some twenty or thirty pages, he is likely to become discouraged and lay the book down. Said an old Scotch woman, whose pastor was guilty of consuming too much time in the introductions to his sermons: "The good old man takes so long a time setting the table and getting things ready that I lose my appetite by the time the meal comes." A lengthy introduction tires the people. Do not keep the people waiting too long on the porch; let them into the house as soon as you can to see its furniture and enjoy its comforts. An introduction lasting five minutes is long enough for a forty-minute sermon.

POSITIVE QUALITIES:

1. It Should Have a Vital Relation to the Theme.

2. It Should Contain But One Theme.

3. There Should Be a Natural Transition.

The transition from the introduction to the body of the sermon should be a natural one. It must not be forced, abrupt, or strained.

4. It Should Be Prepared Carefully.

It should not be left to the spur of the moment, or to the inspiration of the occasion. It is well to write it out fully. First impressions are the more lasting; therefore prepare your introduction well. It is not sufficient to write the word "Introduction" at the head of your sermon, and do nothing further by way of preparation.

CHAPTER IX

THE SERMON ITSELF

CHAPTER IX.

The Sermon Itself.

B. THE BODY.

This part of a sermon has been called the Plan, or Argument. As such, it implies that much thought and time should be spent upon it. The old adage, "If you think twice before you speak once, you will speak twice the better for it," is truly applicable here. One must be careful, however, lest the plan or argument, however good and important in itself, be made a hobby, and thus become burdensome, hindering rather than helping freeness and enthusiasm in delivery.

I. THE NUMBER OF DIVISIONS.

This question has met with varied answers. Even good preachers differ among themselves in this regard, some advocating as many as seven, and others insisting on not more than three headings. It is doubtless true that no one man can be a law unto another in this respect. Each man must find out for himself by experience just how many or how few divisions he can most effectively divide his sermons into so as not to impede ease and freeness. Blind imitation is fatal here.

Such a saying as: "Three heads, like a sermon," indicates that this number has been a generally accepted one. Just why this has been so we may not be able to state, nevertheless, an examination of the sermons of not a few great preachers reveals a preference for this number. The

reason may be found in the fact that three divisions are not burdensome to remember for either preacher or people, they suggest a beginning, a middle, and an end, afford variety, and avoid tediousness. The preacher must not be bound in the matter; he may use as many divisions as the topic calls for, the subject will allow, and that he can handle.

II. THE NATURE OF THESE DIVISIONS.

In general:

1. They Should Not Be Too Prominent.

The plan or division should not be made too prominent. The pulpit is neither a lecture-room, nor a dissecting room. There is no particular beauty in a skeleton—even though it be a sermon skeleton. The more flesh you can put on it and the less the bony structure can be seen, the more pleasing and inviting will be the sermon.

2. The Divisions Should Set Forth the Subject in a Full, Definite, and Clear Manner.

Particularly should this be the case when the subject is not very clear from the text.

3. The Divisions Should Be Natural and Logical in Their Order and Transition from One to Another.

The negative must come before the positive, and the primary before the secondary. It is not so much a matter of finding a place for the divisions, but of finding the best place for them—that is the important question to settle.

As to whether the outline shall be announced in advance or each point named as it is reached, or whether the divisions should be mentioned from the pulpit at all, is

a question on which there is much difference of opinion. It is, doubtless, very helpful, particularly if the line of thought is somewhat intricate and hard to follow, to draw attention to the divisions as a help to the audience in its attempt to follow the thought of the sermon. On the other hand, some preachers think it takes away from the interest, freshness, and expectancy of the subject if the outline is announced beforehand. The question must be answered by each preacher according as he thinks he is best enabled to effectively present his message. Practice, observation, and inquiry will undoubtedly answer the question in each particular case.

The divisions of a sermon are for the purpose of elaborating and amplifying the subject. This may be done by restating the theme in different words, by detailing general statements, by setting forth abstract facts in concrete terms, and by clarifying the subject by the use of illustrations.

Let us now look at the nature of these divisions.

In particular:

1. The First Division. (I. What?)

The first division of a sermon should deal with a statement and definition of the subject or proposition. It should answer the question, What? It should occupy itself with definitions, and should afford the preacher the opportunity of stating clearly and unmistakably just what the theme is he is dealing with, and what the particular phase of the doctrine or duty he is inculcating. There should be no misunderstanding of the subject after the first division is thoroughly dealt with. The deck should then be clear for action. It is in a very special sense an address to the intellect as contrasted with that to the emotions or the will.

But how can we answer this sermon question, What? In four ways:

a) *By defining the subject, and the terms of it.*

If, for instance, the theme of the sermon is "Sanctification," then the purpose of the first division should be to define just what is meant by this word. Here one may deal with misunderstood phases of the subject, refute errors, correct erroneous views, and set forth in clear outline just what is meant by the term Sanctification.

The subject may be elucidated by setting forth the synonymous terms in which this doctrine is stated, or by setting forth its relation to the other great doctrines of the Scriptures, such as justification, or regeneration. Here we define clearly the meaning of the words and terms of the theme. This is the part of the sermon in which much use is made of the dictionary and lexicon.

b) *The question, What? may be answered by explanation.*

Ofttimes the text is misunderstood. Take, as an example, 1 Corinthians 2:9: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." How often we hear this verse applied to the future glory of the believer, whereas in point of fact, it has no reference to the future at all, as verse 10 clearly shows: "But God hath (now) revealed them to us by his Spirit." This is what is meant by explanation.

Be sure that what you are seeking to explain is really explainable. It is questionable, to say the least, whether some of the doctrines of the Christian faith are really explainable, e. g., the Trinity, the which is a fact of the Christian faith to be believed, and not a doctrine to be explained. Before undertaking to explain any subject, be sure you understand it yourself. These words of warn-

ing may not be out of place, for more than one preacher has been guilty of the folly of seeking to explain some difficult subject, at the same time manifesting to his audience how totally ignorant he himself was of it.

c) *The question, What? may be answered by relation, the use of comparisons, relations, and contrasts.*

How often Christ defined such terms as "the kingdom of heaven" by likening it to something already familiar to his hearers: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." The preacher will do well to ask, with the great Teacher, "To what shall I liken" this? In what better way could the doctrine of the imminence of the second coming of Christ have been set forth than by the words, "like a thief"? Preachers make the mistake of not putting enough "likes" in their sermons. To define your subject, therefore, ask yourself to what you should "liken" it.

Or we may seek to show how our subject is related to kindred subjects: e. g., if "Justification" is our theme, we might explain how it is related to sanctification and adoption, for instance.

Or, again, it may be asked, To what does this truth stand in contrast? Scripture makes much use of this method of definition: e. g., sheep and goats, wheat and chaff, light and darkness, godly and ungodly, saint and sinner, life and death. It is said that the negro did not know that he was black until he saw a white man. He learned the truth by contrast.

d) *The question, What? may be answered by the use of illustrations.*

An illustration is to a sermon what a window is to a building—that which lets light in. A house must not be all windows, nor must a sermon be all illustrations. While the power of illustration is subject to abuse, it nevertheless is one of the most effective means for defin-

ing words, terms, or subjects. One must be very sure that the illustration really illustrates. Stained glass windows do not let in much light. The parables of Christ are the illustrations of His subjects. How forcibly the foolishness of the man who hears the word and does not obey it, is set forth by the illustration of the man who built his house upon the sand (Matthew 7). How vividly the folly of riches is set forth by the story of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21).

To sum up then, we may say, that the purpose of the first division of the body or plan of a sermon is to clearly, fully, and lucidly set forth the theme of the sermon by definition, explanation, relation, comparison and contrast, and illustration.

2. The Second General Division. (II. Why?)

This division should seek to answer the question, *Why?* that is, it should endeavor to set forth the necessity, reason, or proof of the theme or proposition. If the first division asks, What is the subject? the second asks, Why is it true? Why should I believe it or accept it? How may it be proven? Is it reasonable?

PROVING A PROPOSITION. CAUTION AND SUGGESTION.

All things are not to be taken for granted. The acceptance of some facts rests upon evidence. Christ gave "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection.

Remember that not everything needs to be proven; some facts are self-evident. It is not necessary to attempt to prove to a man who questions it, that the sun exists, for it is a self-evident fact. Nor need we enter into an argument to prove the existence of God. The evidences of His handiwork are too apparent: "The invisible

things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." "The heavens declare the glory of God." Again, not everything can be proven: the doctrine of the Trinity, for example. Nor must we consider ourselves under obligation to prove a negative. If "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," then it is his duty to prove that there is none, and not ours to prove that there is. We should not attempt to prove a thing which we ourselves do not believe to be true or capable of proof. Herein lies one of the serious dangers of accepting, for the purpose of debate, that phase of a subject which we do not believe, nor deem capable of proof. If we are satisfied that a thing is not true, nor capable of proof, then we should not undertake to prove its truthfulness.

Another word by way of suggestion: Begin your argument by using some fact already known to and acknowledged by the hearer. Argue from the known to the unknown. Use familiar arguments. Paul, when arguing with farmers, spoke to them of "fruitful seasons"; but when addressing the Athenian philosophers, he referred them to what their "own poets" had said. The common people heard Christ gladly because He used arguments they could readily understand. It is well for the preacher to rely, as far as possible, upon scriptural arguments, for they are the most convincing.

*THE SOURCES OF ARGUMENT:**

Cause and effect.

Briefly stated, this means that every effect has some cause. Nothing is without cause. If one is seeking to prove the resurrection of Christ he may use such arguments as the empty grave, the Lord's Day, the Christian Church. These are effects; what are their causes? How did that tomb become empty? What accounts for the

*Cf. Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons.*

change from the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Lord's Day? What gave rise to the Christian Church? In what great fact did the New Testament have its birth? On what ground has the Christian Church for centuries commemorated the Easter festival? These are effects; what are their causes?

Testimony.

Much use can be made of this method of argument in such texts as: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" What was the testimony of those who were closest to Him, and who knew Him best? What did His enemies say about Him? What was the testimony of His works?

Effective testimony is said to depend upon three things: First, the character of a witness. Hence lawyers seek to impeach the character of the witness in order that his testimony may have an unfavorable effect upon the jury. A witness whose integrity is beyond question is far more valuable in proving a case than one whose character and reputation are open to suspicion. Secondly, the number of the witnesses. The fact that twenty men witnessed an accident, which they attributed to carelessness on the part of an engineer, is more convincing to a jury than the testimony of but five, or even ten, who testified to the contrary. How does this bear upon the testimony of Christ's resurrection? Was He not "seen of above five hundred brethren at once"? Thirdly, the character of the fact borne witness to. An ordinary fact does not need so great an amount of testimony for its proof as an extraordinary fact does. A supernatural fact needs much stronger evidence for its proof than a natural fact does. The testimony to the supernatural fact of Christ's life received heavenly, that is supernatural witness and testimony (2 Peter 1:16-18).

The testimony of enemies is specially valuable. Hence the testimony of Josephus, Judas Iscariot, Pilate, and demons to Christ's person and work, is exceedingly important.

Authority.

Foremost in this respect is the authority of the Scriptures. In matters of faith and Christian practice the Bible is the court of final appeal, the ultimate authority. The opinion of scholars, the "generally received opinions of mankind, and the proverbs and maxims which express the collective judgment of many, have a greater or less authority according to the nature of the case. * * * Proverbs, or what the common people call 'old sayings,' are very often, as it has been remarked, but the striking expression of some half truth, or the result of some hasty generalization, and in many cases they can be matched by other sayings to precisely the opposite effect." Great care should, therefore, be exercised in the choice of such authorities, or so-called authoritative sayings.

Induction.

Induction has been defined as "the process of a general rule from a sufficient number of particular cases. Finding something to be true of certain individual objects, we conclude that the same thing is true of the whole class to which these individuals belong, and afterward prove it to be true of any new object, simply by showing that that object belongs to the same class." This form of argument is said to be the commonest and fraught with the greatest error and danger if not properly used. The greatest care should, therefore, be exercised in its use.

Analogy.

Logically speaking, an analogy is "a form of reasoning, from the similarity of two or more things in certain particulars, their similarity in other particulars is in-

ferred. Thus, the earth and Mars are both planets, nearly equidistant from the sun, not differing greatly in density, having similar distributions of seas and continents, alike in conditions of humidity, temperature, seasons, day and night, etc., but the earth also supports organic life; hence Mars (probably) supports organic life—is an argument from analogy"—*Century Dictionary.* If men say it would be unjust of God to punish them for violating His law when they did not believe, or did not certainly know, that it was His law, we point them to the fact that this holds true of physical laws—that he who takes poison will be killed, even though he did not know, or did not believe that it was poison. If men object to the doctrine of original sin, as incompatible with divine goodness, we point to inherited disease, inherited proclivities to vice, inherited dishonor.

Deduction.

Deduction is the inverse process of inferring a particular case from a law of cases presumed to be of like nature; something derived as a result from a known fact; a necessary inference. Suppose we say of a man, "He cannot but take gloomy views of life, because his health is so poor." Here is involved an argument based on the general assumption that any one whose health is poor must take gloomy views of life—"This invention will not come into extensive use; it is cumbrous, hard to operate, and liable to get out of order." Here the reasons given all go to ground the assertion, being based on the general truth that any machine that is cumbrous, hard to operate, and liable to get out of order is impaired for extensive use.

Refutation.

The preacher must "be able with the sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there

are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers * * * whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:9-11). Refuting doubtless comes more easy to men than proving, inasmuch as it is easier to pull down than it is to build up. We must not undertake to refute every objection to the truth. Some objections are not worth refuting. Nor must we create objections for the purpose of refuting them. "Refutation whether of an erroneous proposition, or of an objection to the truth, will be accomplished by showing either that the terms are ambiguous, the premises false, the reasoning unsound, or the conclusion irrelevant. Refutation of an error is sometimes strengthened by showing how the error may have originated. Our Lord made use of this form of argument in Matthew 12:27: "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?" In refuting, state the objection fully and fairly so that the hearer will be able to say, "Yes, that is a full and fair statement of the case; if that can be answered satisfactorily, it will help me."

Experience.

It is to this that Paul appeals in his great argument for the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15). Says the apostle: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins (v. 17)." But the Corinthians knew that they had not believed in vain: they knew, by a very real experience, that they were not still in their sins, for a power, far greater than any human power or self-imposed reformation, and which must therefore have come from the risen Christ, had given them a glorious victory over their previous sinful life. An answered prayer is the best argument for the reality of prayer. It is Christian experience that has saved Christian doctrine, and not vice versa. The strongest argument for the existence of God and the deity of Christ lies in the Christian experience of these facts.

Sometimes the second general division of a sermon occupies itself with showing the *necessity,* or the *reasonableness* of the theme discussed. For illustration of this usage, see the sermon on "The New Birth," and "The Resurrection" (pp. 153 and 151).

3. The Third General Division. (III. How?)

The purpose of this division is to set forth the manner and method by which the theme of the sermon may be brought about, or the conditions under which it may be received or fulfilled. If the theme of discussion is "Regeneration," for example, and the two divisions already dealt with have shown what this doctrine means, and why it is necessary, then the third division shows how it may be brought about: What it is; Why it is; How it takes place.

There are three thoughts usually present in the treatment of this division, namely, the divine agency, or God's part; the human agency, or man's part; the question of means. For illustration, see the outline of the sermon on the "New Birth" (p. 153).

4. The Fourth General Division. (IV. What Then?)

If the first division answers the question, What is it? by explanation; the second, Why is it? by argumentation; the third, How? by what means; the fourth answers the question, What then? by application. What is it? Why is it? How is it? What then?—these, in short, are the four divisions of the body or argument of a sermon. (See sermon outline on "The Resurrection of Christ," p. 151.)

This part of the sermon is by no means to be considered subordinate, of as a mere addition to the composition. Indeed it may be questioned whether the sermon proper

has really begun until the application is reached. The late Charles H. Spurgeon said: "Where the application begins, there the sermon begins." Daniel Webster is reported to have said on one occasion: "When a man preaches to me, I want him to make it a personal matter, a personal matter, a personal matter!" The application is that part of the sermon which more than any other part makes it a personal matter.

Many preachers form the habit of making a practical application after each point in the sermon. This, of course, will have some modifying effect upon this particular division. And yet, it does seem perfectly fitting and natural that there should be a practical application of the whole matter at the conclusion of the sermon. It may be well, therefore, if application is made at the end of each division, not to make it exhaustive, but to leave sufficient to make a fitting close to the sermon.

THE APPLICATION MAY ASSUME VARIOUS FORMS:

Instruction.

If, for example, the theme of the sermon is "The Need of Bible Study," then a fitting application would consist in the giving of instruction as to how to proceed to the study of the Bible. In the first part of your sermon you have set forth very clearly just what is meant by Bible study; and in the second, convincing reasons why the Bible should be studied. It seems only natural and proper, therefore, that you should now give instruction as to how this study can be carried on so as to yield the best results. Many a preacher has sent his audience away convinced and longing, but ignorant of the best way, or indeed any way, of satisfying that longing. This is wrong.

Persuasion.

Dr. Broadus says: "It is not enough to convince men of truth, nor enough to make them see how it applies to themselves, and how it might be practicable for them to act it out—but we must persuade men." A distinguished minister said that he could never exhort; he could explain and prove what was truth and duty, but then he must leave the people to themselves. The Apostle Paul, however, could not only argue, but could also say, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Do we not well know, from observation and from experience, that a man may see his duty and still neglect it? Have we not often been led by persuasion to do something, good or bad, from which we are shrinking. It is not enough that men *see* the truth, they must be made to *feel* it. Men, usually do not turn from sin simply because they ought to. They must be made to feel the awfulness and the guilt of it before they will turn away from it. In other words, they must be persuaded that it is to their best and eternal interests to forsake sin. Men become wearied of constant exhortations; they must be made to feel.

ACTION AND EMOTION.

To this end, therefore, the preacher ought to know *the link which connects action with feeling.* He must study the emotions. The will is not a self-determining factor; it does not act independently of the emotions; it is moved to action by them. Desire naturally prompts volition. We should lay emphasis on a careful study of motives. "Reason, reason, as much as you like; but beware of thinking that it answers for everything. This mother loves her child; will reason comfort her? Does cool reason control the inspired poet, the heroic warrior, the lover? Reason guides but a small part of man, and

that the least interesting. The rest obeys feeling, true or false; and passion, good or bad."—*Abbe Roux.* If the preacher is deficient in this power, he ought to cultivate it; if excessive, restrain it. He ought to study some authoritative work on the subject.

IMPELLING MOTIVES.

Particular attention ought also to be paid to the motives that lead men to action. The preacher should be a master in handling them. "Impelling motives," says Professor A. E. Phillips, in his work, *Effective Speaking,* "may be defined as man's spiritual, intellectual, moral and material wants. For working purposes they may be given the following classification: Self-preservation, property, power, reputation, affection, sentiments, tastes. The distinction between these impelling motives, and the manner of their application may be seen best, perhaps, by an example. Let us suppose the purpose is to have the listener lead a temperate life. The argument, in outline, might consist of the entire Seven Impelling Motives, after the manner following:

Theme: You should be temperate in all things—because you will be better off from the following viewpoints:

Self-Preservation. You will have better health and a longer life.

Property. You will earn more and save more.

Power. You will have greater mental force, greater moral power, greater self-control. You will do more yourself and exert greater power over others.

Reputation. Your friends and acquaintances will admire you, hold you in higher esteem.

Affections. You will avoid wounding the feelings of those you love; your companionship will give them

greater pleasure. You will be able to be of more use to them.

Sentiments. You will prove yourself a man. You will show self-respect. It is right to be temperate.

Tastes. You will increase both your opportunity and your ability to appreciate the best in art, literature, drama.

If, then, we are seeking action so frequently, and, if, further, action is the result of the superiority of the impelling motives over the restraining motives, it is plain that the more we bring these impelling motives to bear upon a given audience or person, the more likely will we attain our end. Therefore, it is of the greatest importance that we master their ready use."

The preacher, of course, dealing as he does with eternal issues, will deal with the spiritual and eternal phases of these "impelling motives." Under "self-preservation" he will deal not merely with "better health and a longer life" here, but with the eternal life of the ages to come. Under "reputation" he will speak not only of the admiration of friends and acquaintances, but, what is infinitely more important—the esteem and approval of God.

CHAPTER X

THE SERMON ITSELF

CHAPTER X.

THE SERMON ITSELF.

C. THE CONCLUSION.

1. Its Importance.

The Greek orators expressed their conception of the importance of the Conclusion of an address, or oration, by calling it, "the final struggle which decides the conflict." It is not too much to say that the last five minutes of the sermon is the most important part of it. It is during this time that the issues involved are decided, if decided at all. Yet, how very seldom the conclusion receives the preparation and thought it ought to by virtue of its important place. Very often its matter and form are left to the inspiration (?) of the moment. How scattering, and wild, and pointless are the "concluding remarks" of the average sermon—what aimless exhortations! This is sad, indeed, when we remember that we have been speaking for thirty or forty minutes for the very purpose of accomplishing the work of the last five minutes. The Introduction and the Body or Argument of the sermon, with its definition, explanation, proof, and argument, have all been dealt with for the very purpose of bringing things to an issue in the Conclusion. What a mistake then to neglect the thorough preparation of this important part of the sermon.

2. What Form Shall the Conclusion Take?

The answer to this question depends altogether on the manner in which the matter which may properly belong

to the conclusion has been included in the preceding part —What then?— of the sermon. If the main issue of the conclusion be to leave the listener with the impression of completeness, then it may be well to gather up the missing threads. This is sometimes done by what is called—

a) *Recapitulation.*

Cicero defines Recapitulation as "recollection revived, not speech repeated." By this we are not to understand that to repeat the divisions or leading thoughts of the sermon is a breach of homiletics, but that recapitulation must not consist merely in such repetition. It should take the form rather of a grand resumé in which is gathered up in a few striking, well-chosen, soul-moving sentences, or in a well-chosen and pointed illustration, the grand, central idea and purpose of the entire sermon.

b) *Poem, or illustration.*

Sometimes the conclusion of the sermon takes the form of a poem, or the verse of some well-known hymn. Or the sermon may be finished by the use of one striking sentence.

(See under the fourth general division of a sermon: "Form which application may assume" for further instruction on this point, see pp. 100, 101.)

3. What Should Be the Length of the Conclusion?

It should not be any longer than the introduction. From three to five minutes is long enough. Conclude when you are through. If you say, "And now, finally," let it be finally. Do not say, "Now, this last word," and then still go on. If it is the last word, let it be the last. Indeed it may not be wise to let it be known that you are bringing your sermon to a close. Close before your people think about it. It is better to leave a congregation longing than loathing.

For illustrations of Textual Sermons, see pp. 151-165.

CHAPTER XI

THE EXPOSITORY SERMON

CHAPTER XI.

The Expository Sermon.

It is surprising how many preachers concede the exceedingly important place that ought to be given to expository preaching in their ministry, and then to hear them confess in almost the same breath that they do not give it such a place. They admit that they ought to do it, and confess that they do not. Just why they do not follow the expository method of preaching is not quite clear. Many feel that they do not possess the ability for it, they think they have not the gift of an expositor. Ought not the preacher to cultivate and stir up such a gift? Should he not preach after this manner as well as after any other? If, as he admits, expository preaching is one of the best, if not the very best method of preaching, ought he not to learn to preach in that way? If one is afraid to venture on this method at the regular Sunday services, experiment may be made in the mid-week meeting. At all events it ought to be tried. F. B. Meyer and G. Campbell Morgan of London are both noted expository preachers.

I. DEFINITION OF EXPOSITORY SERMON.

What is meant by an Expository Sermon, and in what respects does it differ from other sermons? Mainly because it is occupied more fully with the exposition of the Scripture itself than is the case with the textual sermon, for example. The textual or topical sermon

occupies itself chiefly with some one certain thought or topic suggested by the text; whereas the expository sermon occupies itself with the exposition of the entire scripture chosen.

II. ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

1. It Produces a Biblical Preacher and Hearer.

No preacher can adopt the expository method of proclaiming truth without himself being very greatly indoctrinated and enriched by the study of the Word. No congregation can sit long under a ministry of this kind without being deeply instructed in the Scriptures. Thus the preacher and his audience will be kept biblical.

2. It Conforms to the Biblical Ideal of Preaching.

It is more in harmony with the scriptural plan of preaching as illustrated, for example, in the Acts of the Apostles, than textual preaching. This was Jesus' method (Luke 4), Stephen's (Acts 7 and 8), Paul's (Acts 28), and Peter's (Acts 2 and 3).

3. It is Wider in Scope.

It affords the preacher a wider scope for the practical application of truth to the lives of his hearers. Too often is the minister accused of being too personal in his application of certain truth, going astray from his text in order to make personal references. Whether this is altogether true or not, it is a criticism often made in connection with the textual sermon. This criticism would either be altogether removed or greatly lightened if the expository method were pursued. It gives one greater opportunity for application.

III. THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

Can there be dangers connected with so advantageous a form of preaching? Yes; and they are to be guarded against, otherwise they seriously hurt one's ministry. Some of these possible disadvantages are:

1. Monotony.

There is the danger that comes from announcing the same book of the Bible from which your text is taken for many successive Sundays. This is likely to create monotony with a consequent loss of interest and probably attendance. Yet one need not continue to choose his text from the same book week after week. Expository preaching does not necessarily involve any such course of action.

2. Laziness.

If not carefully watched it may lead to laziness in the way of preparation of one's sermon. There is such a danger of reading verse after verse of the text chosen, and passing a few comments or making a few remarks on them, so that the sermon becomes a little commentary on the passage chosen rather than a proclamation of the great truth set forth therein. As someone has well said: "If he is persecuted in one passage, he can flee to another."

3. Too Long a Text.

It is sometimes considered disadvantageous because the text chosen for consideration is so large that it cannot be reasonably expected that the audience can remember it. This is a decided disadvantage to the au-

dience, and would tend to discourage the memorizing of Scripture.

4. Too Confining.

It has been said that the expository method of preaching does not afford the opportunity for dealing with current topics. Yet the wide-awake preacher can make it minister to such needs.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

1. Choose for the Text a Portion of Scripture that Contains One Leading Thought or Theme.

The expository sermon should be characterized by a unity of theme just as much so as a textual sermon. Because there are many verses in the text is no reason why there should be many and different thoughts or themes, thus constituting a number of sermonettes in one sermon. It may be more difficult to find this unity of thought in expository than in textual preaching because of the difference in the length of the text chosen, but to be successful in this method of preaching it must be done at all costs. It is this slipshod method of covering many themes in one sermon, and calling it expository preaching, that has brought this splendid and biblical method of proclaiming the truth of God into disrepute in some quarters. See to it then that the expository sermon be characterized by unity of theme. In order to accomplish this desirable end it can readily be seen that one cannot expatiate upon every detail in the text chosen.

2. Choose Texts from Different Parts of the Scripture.

To avoid the disadvantage of the monotony mentioned

above, do not confine yourself to one book in the Bible, nor to successive chapters in the one book. At least do not begin that way. Select certain important and well-known passages containing, perhaps, not more than four or five verses to begin with. Then take an entire paragraph, then a whole chapter. After a while, when the congregation has become accustomed to the expository method of preaching, a whole book, like the Epistle to the Ephesians, or one shorter, may be chosen. Do not choose a book with too many chapters to begin with. It takes too long a time to finish the book, and the interest of the people is likely to lag in the meantime. The Epistles to the Colossians, Titus, or Second Thessalonians are good books to begin with.

3. A Thorough Study of the Entire Text is an Absolute Condition of Success.

Not only must the entire section be studied, but every paragraph, verse, sentence, phrase, and word must be carefully studied until its meaning is ascertained. Expository preaching is by no means, as some have erroneously supposed, a lazy way of preaching. If anything it requires far more work than any other method of sermonizing. But it yields larger results, and so is worth the extra work. Sermonizing is hard and laborious work anyway. The true preacher will have no easy time of it. Lazy men had better steer clear of the ministry.

4. Be Sure to Avoid Being Merely Theoretic; Be Practical As Well.

There is great danger in expository preaching of being so taken up with the great truths set forth in the text, and in the endeavor to make others see them that the preacher is likely to forget that the end of all preaching is practice, and so overlook the practical application of

the great truths enunciated. Let him remember that where the application begins, the sermon begins. Do not fail to apply the truth taught.

For illustrations of Expository Sermons, see pp. 165-168.

CHAPTER XII

BIBLE READINGS

CHAPTER XII.

Bible Readings.

Concisely stated, the difference between a Bible Reading and a textual sermon lies in this: that the former consists in the compilation of a greater or less number of Scripture passages, and their comparison one with another; while the latter usually consists in the exposition of a single text.

I. ADVANTAGES OF A BIBLE READING OVER THE TEXTUAL SERMON.

1. For the Preacher Himself.

a) *It is simpler and easier.*

The complexity so characteristic of the textual sermon is, for the most part, absent in the Bible Reading. Multiform divisions and minute analysis are not, usually, required. It is, therefore, a good style of preaching for the beginner in homiletics to adopt.

b) *It prevents mind-wandering.*

The preacher is not confined to a single text. He cannot very well be accused of the fault into which the old colored preacher is said to have fallen, namely, that of taking a text, then of departing from it, and finally, of not coming back to it.

c) *It helps to keep the preacher biblical.*

It is possible in the preparation of a textual sermon to read the Bible for the text, then to close it, and not

look at it again during the preparation of the sermon. This is hardly possible in the preparation of a Bible Reading, for one is compelled to constantly turn from one part of the Bible to another. Scripture must be compared with scripture. To do this means to become a biblical preacher.

d) *Is has the tendency to prevent one-sided views of Bible truths.*

One can scarcely fail to get a full-orbed view of the truth selected for the Bible Reading so long as he is compelled to search from one end of the Bible to the other for his sermon material. He will have a clear conception of the "analogy of faith."

2. Advantages with Reference to the People.

a) *By this style of preaching the people will continually be instructed in divine truth.*

They will be likely to know much more of God's Word and will than by listening to textual sermons only. It may truly be said that there is a sad lack of Bible instruction in the average sermon. Very often the only biblical thing about the sermon is the text. If the sermonizing of the past few years had had a much greater supply of Bible instruction in it, the number of people who have left our churches and joined some of the misleading and erroneous sects, would have been far less.

b) *It keeps the people in a spirit of constant expectancy.*

They will be wondering what is in reserve; they will be desirous of knowing what phase of the truth is to be presented next. This, in itself, is of great advantage to the preacher.

II. HELPS NEEDED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF BIBLE READINGS

1. A Concordance.

Among concordances Cruden's stands first and foremost for those who study the Bible in English only, and have no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew. Strong's, Young's, and the *Englishman's Greek Concordance,* may be used very effectively by those who have a very little knowledge of the Greek. Indeed, if one knows but the Greek and Hebrew alphabet he can use these works with great profit, and with much advantage over Cruden's.

2. A Topical Text Book.

There are two kinds of such books: one in which the topics are arranged in their logical order, irrespective of their order in the Bible; the other, contains the topics according to their order in the Bible. Inglis' *Bible Text Cyclopedia* is a good illustration of the latter; Torrey's *Topical Text Book* of the former. Each one has its own particular advantage; both should be in the possession of the preacher.

3. Word Lists.

By these are meant such lists of topics and subjects as will be found at the back of the ordinary teacher's Bible.

4. A Good, Well-bound Reference Bible.

This, while mentioned last, is the most important. What is the best reference Bible? Opinions differ. One Bible teacher likes one kind, another prefers some other. There is as much difference among Bible teachers with reference to the best edition of the Bible as there is among music teachers touching the best make of pianos.

Any of the standard editions of the Bible are good: the Bagster, Oxford, Nelson. It is good to have a Revised Version as well as the Authorized Version to which you may continually refer. Some things are much clearer in the Revised Version than in the King James Version.

III. THE PLAN AND METHOD OF CONSTRUCTING BIBLE READINGS.

Having chosen the theme for the Bible Reading—the rules for which are the same as those which enter into the choice of a text for a textual sermon (see p. 28) proceed in the following manner:

1. Find Out the Teaching of the WHOLE Bible on the Subject Chosen.

The Bible must be searched from Genesis to Revelation in order to obtain a full and complete view of the subject under consideration. Only thus may onesidedness and hobby-riding be avoided. If we are to declare the whole counsel of God to the people we must know the whole counsel, and in order to know it we must know what the whole Bible says about it. This means that in preparing a Bible Reading on "Faith," for example, we must look up not only all that is to be found under the word "faith," but also what is recorded under the synonyms for faith, such as "belief," "believe," "receive," "trust," etc. This does not mean, of course, that one must read the Bible through from beginning to end in order to do this. The concordance may be used for this purpose.

2. Prepare Sheets of Paper with Appropriate Headings.

Prepare four or five sheets of blank paper. On the top of the first sheet write the question, "What?"; on

the second, "Why?"; the third, "How?"; the fourth, "What then?" More sheets of paper may be used as the needs of the case may require.

3. Now Take the Concordance, Which We Will Suppose in This Case is Cruden's, and Turn to the Word "Faith."

The first thing you find under this word is a number of definitions of the word. Various kinds of faith are mentioned, such as, historical, temporary, justifying faith, etc. These definitions, with their accompanying references, may be written down on the sheet of paper marked, "What?' This is for the purpose of defining the subject.

Coming more particularly to the work of the concordance proper: reading down the column you come, for example, to Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," etc. You have here a definition of faith. Now write on the sheet marked "What?" the following: Hebrews 11:1—"Faith is the substance," etc. Reading further in the concordance you come tc Hebrews 11:6—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Where shall we put this?—on what sheet? under what heading? Under "Why?" because it shows the necessity for having faith. Reading again, we come to Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing," etc. This verse may be written on the sheet marked "How?" for it shows how faith may be obtained. Proceed in this way until you have finished every reference in the column of the concordance. The synonyms must then be examined and dealt with in the same way. Thus a thorough grasp of the subject as set forth in the whole Bible is obtained.

A word or two with reference to the use of the other concordances mentioned above may be helpful at this point. Let us take a glance at Strong's, for example.

As one allows his eye to pass from quotation to quotation in the column on "faith," he quickly observes that by the side of each reference there is a number which refers him to a glossary at the back of the book. He observes, further, that different numerals are placed opposite the various references, thus indicating that in the original the word is not just exactly the same in meaning. For instance, in looking up the meaning of the word "faith" in Romans 14:22—"Hast thou faith?" one is surprised to find that the word here used does not mean "faith" in the generally accepted sense of that word, at all,—that is, it does not mean saving faith, nor even that faith that lays hold of the promises of God, but simply "persuasion," thus making, "Hast thou faith?" read, "Art thou persuaded?" Such an understanding of the words in the texts used is very important in order to a true presentation of the doctrine.

IV. BY WAY OF SUGGESTION AND CAUTION

1. Do Not Use Too Many Texts of Scripture.

No infallible rule can be laid down as to the number of Scripture passages to be used in any one Bible Reading. Only the most striking and representative passages should be chosen. The length of comment made on each passage, together with the amount of time at the disposal of the speaker, will determine the number. Examine outlines of Bible Readings on pp. 169-176.

2. Be Careful to Arrange the Texts in Their Logical Order.

Let progress in thought mark the order and arrangement of the references. The transition from one thought to another should be natural, not forced or strained.

3. Explain Each Passage or Group of Passages Carefully.

No pains should be spared in the minute analysis of each word in each verse chosen as a proof-text. Be sure to understand just what the text teaches. Let the explanation be such as the audience can readily understand. See under "Interpretation of the Text," p. 39.

4. Be Sure to Illustrate Each Point.

This is essential to the effectiveness of a Bible Reading, even more so than in the case of a textual sermon. As a rule, use Bible illustrations. There is an abundance of them, and they illustrate Bible truths far better than illustrations taken from books of stock illustrations.

5. Limit the Subject.

If your subject deals with a theme as large as "faith," for example, it is well to take up only a certain phase of it. Do not try to cover the entire subject. Different aspects of "faith" may be presented, viz.: justifying faith; the faith that claims the promises, etc.

For illustrative Bible Readings, see pp. 169-176.

CHAPTER XIII

GREAT CHAPTERS AS TEXTS

CHAPTER XIII.

GREAT CHAPTERS AS TEXTS.

Oftentimes one is much impressed with the truth as set forth completely and vividly in some one chapter of the Bible, and desires to take that chapter as a text. This is legitimate; indeed it is a practice often honored with signal blessing and profit. Some of the greatest and most helpful sermons ever preached have had texts as large as an entire chapter.

I. SUGGESTIONS.

1. Be Sure that the Chapter You Choose for a Text is a Complete One and Has in It a Complete Subject.

1 Corinthians 15 contains a complete subject: "The Resurrection of the Body." 1 Corinthians 13 is a complete treatise on the subject of "Love." John 17, "The Prayer of our Lord," is also a complete chapter. It would be very difficult to deal with some chapters in Proverbs and Psalms in this way.

2. Ascertain the True Setting of the Chapter.

It is useless to preach on the eighth chapter of Romans, for instance, unless one has in mind the preceding chapters. No exposition of this wonderful chapter would be complete that did not relate itself to the chapters preceding it. This is especially true of chapters chosen from the prophets. Their relation to the history

and condition of the times must be considered before a sermon is prepared with the chapter as its text (cf. Isaiah 6 with 2 Chronicles 26). Sometimes the purpose of the entire book must be considered before one can arrive at a true understanding of the chapter.

3. Analyze the Chapter.

Outline it; divide it; know what its general divisions and sub-divisions are. The Revised Version will greatly help you in this direction. Read the chapter over carefully until the outline stands out bold and clear. It can be done. Keep at it until you succeed. As a rule the great chapters choosen as texts, divide themselves naturally. A careful reading of John 17, for example, reveals to you three natural divisions, which a careful reader could scarcely miss: Christ's prayer for Himself, for His apostles, and for the future Church.

4. Be Sure to Get the Main Theme of the Chapter.

It may require many readings of the chapter to secure this result, but it must be done. Sermonizing is not easy work anyway. The theme of 1 Corinthians 13 is "Love"; chapter 14, "Spiritual Gifts"; chapter 15, "The Resurrection."

5. Surround the Main Theme with Questions.

Answer these questions from the contents of the chapter. If you take 1 Corinthians 13, then ask, What is love? What are its characteristics? How does it manifest itself? What is its relation to and in comparison with other gifts and graces of the Spirit? and so on. These answers will furnish you with the divisions and sub-divisions of the chapter and also of your sermon. All your sermon will then be in your text; you will not be likely to wander from it: your text will then be,

a text in reality, and not, as is ofttimes the case, a pretext.

6. Compare the Parallel Accounts.

This is especially true of chapters chosen from the Kings and Chronicles, and sometimes the prophets. There are passages in the Kings which have their sequel in the Chronicles; and in the prophets which have their sequel in both these books.

For illustrative sermons on Great Chapters as Texts, see pp. 176-178.

CHAPTER XIV

ILLUSTRATIONS AND THEIR USE

CHAPTER XIV.

Illustrations and Their Use.

I. THEIR IMPORTANCE.

One need scarcely speak of the great importance of the right use of illustrations in preaching. It is conceded on every side. The greatest preachers have been masters in the art of illustration. That the pictorial satisfies an inherent desire on the part of an audience cannot be reasonably questioned. Children love stories, and scarcely any man grows so old as not to enjoy a story. It is said that one of the leading Chicago papers pays its principal cartoonist $20,000 a year; and many a reader has said that ofttimes the cartoon has been of more value than the rest of the paper. This was probably an exaggerated comparison, but it may illustrate the value of our subject.

Perhaps our Lord set forth by His example more than anyone else, the value of illustrations in preaching. His discourses abound in anecdotes, illustrations, and similes. No wonder the crowds hung for days upon the words as they fell from His lips. The pictorial and picturesque preacher will always get a hearing. The ability of any public speaker to turn the ears of his audience into eyes constitutes an essential element in his success. As the apostle puts it, we are to "make all men see." It has been well said that "The eye is the pioneer of all learning." "Always throwing light upon the matter—that is the only part of the speech worth hearing"—said Carlyle.

The work of the preacher is to make men first *see* things, then *feel* them, then *act* upon them. If the first result is not gained, the others, of course, will fail; while often if the first is gained the other two go along with it.

The use of illustrations is a great help to the audience to enable them to carry home the truth of the sermon. How many times we hear of people who have forgotten the text, and the argument of the sermon, but well remember the illustration used—and, of course, along with it the truth the illustration was intended to convey and fix in the mind. Indeed, many an entire sermon, which otherwise would have been forgotten, has been recalled in its entirety by means of recalling an illustration used in the sermon. Just as scientists are said to be able to construct an entire animal from one bone, so many a whole sermon has been recalled by the use of one illustration.

Who has not noted the effect of an illustration upon an audience which was sleepy and listless? How quickly they prick up their ears as the preacher says: "Now let me illustrate this." How quickly every countenance is lighted up with an expectant expression! How alert is each mind! How entirely changed the complexion of the audience! The mere statement that a man is miserable who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God, might have been stated in ever so forcible language without reaching the conscience of the hearers. But when our Lord proceeded to say: "The ground of a rich man brought forth plentifully," etc., and closed with the words, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. So is every one that is not rich toward God," no conscience could remain unmoved, no hearer could any longer be indifferent to the truth proclaimed. Our Lord's auditors seem to have been so deeply moved, so intensely interested, so wholly absorbed in what He

had to say that they seem to have forgotten that He was using mere illustrations, so that once at least they interrupted Him, and broke in upon one of His parables with the declaration, "Lord, he hath ten pounds!"

How keenly David's conscience was aroused by the story of the little ewe lamb as told by Nathan the prophet! How vividly Ezekiel portrayed the religious condition of Israel by his use of such figures as scales, shears, razor, knife, fire, tiles!

II. THE PURPOSE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. To Throw Light upon the Subject.

To "illustrate" means to light up, to give lustre to, to illuminate, to throw light upon, to make intelligible. Says Cowper:

> The sense was dark—'twas therefore fit
> With simile to illustrate it.

An illustration is to the sermon what a window is to a house—it lets light in. Illustrations are the windows of speech—through them the truth shines. Logic may lay the foundation and build the walls, but illustrations are the windows to let the light in. No one would want to live in a house without windows. So no one cares much to listen to a sermon which contains no illustrations to throw light upon the subject. "You have no 'likes' in your sermons. Christ taught that the kingdom of heaven was 'like' leaven, 'like' a grain of mustard-seed. You tell us what things *are,* but you never tell us *what they are like.*" Such was Dr. John Hall's criticism of a brother minister. In every age of the church's history, the most effective preachers have been those who have made judicious use of illustration in imitation of Christ's method of proclaiming the truth.

2. To Explain.

Yet, to illustrate has a wider meaning than to throw light; it is used also to explain the subject. An illustration setting forth something similar or analogous to the case in hand will often make the subject plain. The power of the Holy Ghost which cannot be seen but may be felt can be helpfully explained by the illustration of the galvanic battery, the power of which one can feel but cannot see. "Many of Jesus' parables and pictures are more than mere illustrations; they have in them the imaginative power of interpretation, the revealing of the vision of the poet. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18), is more than an illustrative example, it is, as Julicher classes it, 'an example of the spiritual worth of humility before God.' It reveals, as in a transparency, the essential and hidden evil of a religious class. Our Lord's controversy with the Pharisees sums itself up in this revealing picture where the inner spirit and tendency of Phariseeism is brought to a luminous point. The parable has the force of a revelation, suddenly illuminating the whole spiritual world. The same quality is in the illustration of hypocrisy in the sixth chapter of Matthew. Jesus takes the cases of almsgiving, prayer, fasting. These were the fashionable religious virtues of the day, and therefore the chosen theatre of hypocrisy: self-seeking in religion leads the humble sequested virtues alone; and Christ's picture of ostentatious service there, have that direct illustration of the religious and ethical imagination which sets it free from the bondage of all externalism. Many of the parables have this quality, such as the seed growing in secret, the Good Samaritan, the Unmerciful Servant, the Prodigal Son, the Two Debtors."—See article in *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels,* entitled, "Illustrations."

3. To Prove.

Illustrations may be used for the purpose of proof. Especially is this true of illustrations from analogy. For example: in Romans, chapters six and seven, the apostle uses three illustrations to show the absurdity of supposing that justification by faith will encourage to sin. Believers are *dead* to sin, and *risen* to another life; they have ceased to be the *slaves* of sin, and have become *servants* unto holiness; they have ceased to be *married* to the law, and have become united to a new husband to whom they must now bear fruit. Each one of these illustrations is not merely explanatory of the believer's position but involves the argument from analogy (cf. W. J. Bryan on *Christ Jesus' Proof of Immortality.*)

4. Ornamentation.

Illustration may serve the purpose of ornamentation. Of course, one must be guarded in this use of illustration, and remember always the old saying, "We ornament construction, and not construct ornament." That is to say, we use illustrations in order that we may make the style of our discourse more interesting, not merely ornamental. Some writer has well said: "Those whose style is barren of such ornament should seek after it, not by tying on worn and faded artificial flowers, but by encouraging the subject to blossom, if that be at all its nature." With this the preacher has little to do, for the cultivation of style is not his main purpose.

5. Conviction.

An illustration may be used to arouse the conscience and clinch the truth. How grandly and vividly this use of illustration is exemplified in Nathan's dealings

with David (2 Samuel 12). The hammer of argument may drive home the nail of truth, but it takes the sledge-hammer of illustration efficiently to clinch it.

III. THE SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. In General, One Should Be on the Lookout for Them Everywhere.

He should seek to "Find tongues in trees, books in running brooks; sermons in stones, and (illustrations) in everything."

It is said of Christ, in the Gospels, that He marked how the Pharisees chose the chief seats. Note the words—"He observed"—how they did the marketing, dressed themselves, trained or mistrained their families, went to church for good or evil purposes, families, went to church for good or evil purposes, spake hard words to or concerning one another. This is how Christ got His illustrations—He observed. He kept an open eye for them. The audience gave this great preacher His illustrations, and what they gave Him He took, and gave back to them. Christ drew his illustrations from the lilies, the raven, salt, a candle, a bushel, a long-faced hypocrite, gnats, moths, large gates and small gates, a needle's eye, yeast in bread, a mustard-seed, a fishing-net, debtors and creditors, etc.

What a wonderful eye Jesus had for the suggestiveness of the material world! The falling of a sparrow to the ground, the growing of a lily, the sailing of a ship, the readiness of the fields for the harvest, the grinding of meal by women at the mill, the reddening glow of the evening sky—all these things were quickly caught up by Him and used in His sermons. The whole heaven and earth became to Him a picture gallery of illustrations. He saw the deepest truths illustrated in the world around Him. The star, the dew-drop, the

flower, the field—all were ablaze with lustrous truth for Him.

Why should not we behold all these things which God hath made: the sky, the star, the dew-drop, the lily, the sparrow? These all are here with us as they were with Him. Having eyes, let us see; and, having ears, let us hear. Let us not be content to find all our illustrations in musty, worn-out books of stock anecdotes when all around us nature is alive with illuminated and illustrative truth. The preacher who has wide open eyes and ears will always be looking for things about him to which he can *liken* the truth he is seeking to present.

2. Coming More Particularly to the Sources of Illustration, Mention May Be Made of the Following:

The Newspapers—to see how "our Father is ruling the world." One of the most interesting pages in the *Christian Herald* is entitled, "The Bible and the Newspaper."

History—ancient, medieval, modern. It has a peculiar and almost unrivalled charm for illustrative purposes.

Poetry should not be neglected as a fruitful field for illustration. Be at home with the poets. Read a good poem each day. Classify it after you have read it, so that you can have it ready for use any time you need it.

Biography—What a rich mine is to be found in this subject! How full of illustration is human life! Is not that the reason why the Old Testament is so interesting—it is so full of biography? How often Paul intersperses his discourses with little personal snatches from his own life. Everybody is interested in real life, in biography. Read the lives of great explorers, great missionaries, great preachers, great men, great women.

The Sciences, the Arts, and the Inventions furnish rich

material in this direction. Music, painting, sculpture, electricity, wireless telegraphy, radium, astronomy, geology, chemistry, etc.,—all are rich in illustrative material.

Then you may draw from the three Kingdoms: animal, vegetable, mineral. Jesus did it: He spoke of wolves, sheep, goats, camels, insects, birds. He referred to the vine, vegetables, grain, seed, corn, wheat, tares, lilies. Pearls, gold, salt, were used by Him to set forth phases of truth. Scenes from domestic life were abundant in his discourses—wardrobe, banking, marriage, grinding, baking. In *religious* matters He referred to fasting, praying, tithing. In *anatomy* He spoke of the lips, heart, feeling, eyes, body, hands. He made use of *astronomy* when He referred to the signs of the sun and the moon, the falling stars, the condition of the sky in the morning and in the evening. When He referred to the rocks, the mountains, and the stony places, did He not hint at *geology?* Even *architecture* did not escape Him, for He spoke of the two buildings, the one built on sand and the other on the rock. *Music* did not meet with a slight from the great Teacher, for He said, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced."

Children are an unfailing source of illustration. Christ likened the generation in which He lived "to children playing in the market-place." The temper, habits, play, disposition, of children are instructive, and may be found helpful in the illustration of certain phases of truth.

The imagination, within a limited sphere and carefully safeguarded, may be drawn on as a fruitful source of picture making. It is perfectly proper to invent an illustration, providing you let your audience know it is an invention, and do not seek to palm it off on them as having a reality in fact. Such an illustration

may be introduced with the words, "It is as if," or, "Suppose a case," or "Let us imagine."

A word or two may be said here with reference to what may be called *Object Illustrations.* A flower may be used to illustrate the resurrection; a magnet, the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit; a watch, the complex character of the human frame as it sets forth the wisdom of God; a blank book, how God keeps a record of our lives; an artificial flower, hypocrisy; a single thread easily broken but being manifolded, is hard to break, the binding force of habit; an ordinary trap, the deceptiveness of temptation; the process of photography, the sensitiveness of the heart to good and evil influences.

IV. SUGGESTIONS AND CAUTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. Beware of Books of Stock Illustrations.

Avoid the practice of feathering your arrows with illustrations from such books. The book of life and nature is open before you; make your own illustrations. Said the late Henry Ward Beecher: "Do you suppose I study old musty books when I want to preach? I study *you.* When I want to deliver a discourse on theology I study *you.* When I want to study more about the doctrine of depravity I study *you.* When I want to know what is right and what is wrong, I see how *you* do, and I have abundant illustrations on every side." Take another instance from Beecher. "He steps into a blacksmith's shop, and watches the sparks fly for a few minutes, then to his study and his pulpit to talk about 'the steel that has suffered most.' If the blacksmith were there, he understood all about the effect of life's discipline upon character—furnace, anvil, vise, the rasp, the emery, the hammer, were tools of which he knew well the operation.

Beecher took his sermons and illustrations from life instead of from books. He put the repose of the granite hills, the smell of the new-mown hay, the lowing of the cattle, and the gambols of the lamb into them. Every sunset cloud effect he ever saw paid tribute to his sermons. The beggar was there, the student, the clerk in the store, and the waiter in the restaurant. He preached where people lived. He brought God down into the streets and workshops and homes of Brooklyn, a God full of sympathy for men's weaknesses and helpfulness for their daily trials!"

No sensible person casts any slur upon the use of illustrations in preaching. Men do complain sometimes, and rightly so, as to their source. That illustrations be fresh, new, helpful, and gathered as the manna was—fresh every day, is what an audience asks, and has a right to expect. Held-over, stock illustrations soon run to seed like a pansy garden, whose owner refuses to pluck the blossoms.

2. Illustrations Should Be Simple.

How simple and easy of comprehension Christ's illustrations were. Any one, even a child, could understand them. The same should be said of the illustrations we use. It has been well said that the illustrations used in the average sermon "are so often cumbered with scientific learning and historic lore, so that like a stained glass window in a cathedral, however beautiful in pattern, they let in little light. But when Christ built up His discourses, doctrines were the pillars, and illustrations the open windows to flood the whole with sunshine."

3. They Should Be within the Comprehension of the Audience.

This is more than can be said of many sermons and illustrations used in these days. Not long ago a young

minister from one of our universities spent about ten minutes of the sermon time illustrating the doctrine he was inculcating by referring his audience—which, by the way, was composed of farmers in a village remote from a city of any size—to some latest discovery in science with which they had absolutely no acquaintance, and of which they doubtless had never heard. The result was tedious in the extreme. The audience was listless, restless, and sleepy. When, however, at the close of his sermon he referred them, for illustration, to the life-giving power that lay inherent in the seed, the restored and keen interest was very manifest.

Be sure your illustrations are understood by your audience. Let them spring from their level, from their memory, their experiences, their familiar observations, since illustrations drawn from a region remote from their actual life meet with no response. James Gordon Bennett, as the story goes, once drew an editorial writer, who prided himself on writing for educated men, to the window of the *Herald* office, saying, "Do you see those people down there on Broadway?" "Yes," said the writer. "Well," said Bennett, "I want you to write for those men down there." Consider your audience, and then talk to "those people." Find your illustration where you can, but be sure it finds them. It will, if you get their viewpoint and see what they are needing.

4. Do Not Lie in Illustrations.

Do not use illustrations from the lives of other men and say they occurred in your own experience. That is lying; lying does not redound to the glory of God; and "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." "All liars"—that means lying preachers too.

5. Never Make a Point for the Sake of Telling a Story.

Such a practice may be admissible in an after-dinner speech, but is strictly out of place in a gospel message. An architect on being advised to use certain decorations said it would violate the first rule to architecture. He replied: "We must never construct ornament, but only ornament construction."

6. Be Sure that the Illustration Illustrates.

Ask yourself, "Does this story or illustration throw light on the subject for me, does it help me to understand the subject better?" If it does not help you, it will not help your audience. If it throws light upon the matter for you, it very likely will for the people to whom you speak. When you hold a light for anybody, it is usual to hold it so that you yourself can see by it. It is the rule, also, for effective illustration. Be sure that your illustration does not exclude the truth you are seeking to illustrate.

7. Do Not Use Too Many Illustrations.

Usually one illustration for each point is sufficient. If two are used for one point there is danger that they may neutralize each other. A second illustration should be used only when the first has failed to do its proper work This is sometimes necessary.

8. Know Your Illustration, and Know How to Tell It.

Be sure you know your illustration as to nature and to fact. Know that it is true. Not long ago a preacher used the following simile as setting forth power of influence: He said, "One drop of iodine will give a purple hue to

a thousand gallons of water." A physician who was present took the preacher to task after the sermon for stating what was not true. Iodine, he claimed, had no such strength.

Know how to tell a story. Many a good illustration has been spoiled by poor telling. To be able to tell a story well and effectively is quite an art. Special attention must be paid to details. Here are some borrowed suggestions on good story-telling:

See it. If you are to make others see it, you must see it yourself. You cannot make clear to others what is not perfectly clear to you.

Feel it. If you are not moved by the illustration, how can you expect to move others by its recital?

Shorten it. Brevity is the soul of story-telling. Short stories are in demand by the pulpit as well as by the press. The probabilities are that your illustration is too long.

Expand it. It may be very meagre in the necessary background; it may be deficient in detail necessary for effective impression.

Master it. Practice it, repeat it so often that you can tell it without reference to your notes. Notes are fatal to the effectiveness of an illustration. Repeat it often in private before you give it in public.

Repeat it. Repetition is the mother of good story-telling. Do not be afraid of telling a good story many times. Even "twice-told tales" may be interesting.

9. Be Sure You Have Something to Illustrate.

Illustrations have been compared to the barbs that fix the arrow in the target. But we must remember that barbs alone are useless. An archer would be poorly off indeed if he had nothing in his quiver but arrow heads and feathers. For an illustration to be useful or effective, there must be something to illustrate. It is possible to

make a sermon consist of all stories. The sermons of some evangelists bear ample witness to this fact, for if the stories were to be extracted from their sermons there would be nothing left on which one could make an intelligent and legitimate appeal.

10. File Away Your Illustrations.

Have a scrap-book or filing index so that you may file away your illustrations according to the themes or subjects they throw light upon. Keep a record as to when and where you may have used them.

PART TWO

OUTLINES OF SERMONS, GOSPEL ADDRESSES, AND BIBLE READINGS

TEXTUAL SERMONS.

Theme: THE CREDIBILITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

Text:

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:4.

"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts 1:3.

Introduction.

The important place of the doctrine in the Christian system.

I. The Nature of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(Elaboration of the theme, answering to, What?)

1. The meaning of credibility.
2. The meaning of Christ's resurrection.

Negatively:

a) Not a swoon.
b) Not resuscitation.
c) Not continued existence of the soul only of Jesus.

Positively:

A literal resurrection of the physical body of Jesus Christ from the tomb in Joseph's garden.

II. The Proof of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(Answering the question, Why? Proof).

Methods of Proof.

1. Cause and effect:

Here are certain effects the causes for which can be traced only to the fact of Christ's resurrection.

a) The empty tomb.
b) The Lord's Day.
c) The Christian Church.
d) The New Testament.

2. Testimony:
   a) The number of witnesses.
   b) The credibility of the witnesses.
   c) The nature of the fact witnessed.
   d) The lack of motive for perjury.
3. Experience: (1 Cor. 15:17).
   Paul's; Corinthians'; ours.

III. The Necessity for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(Also answering, Why? but from another viewpoint).

1. The sinlessness of His life made it impossible that He should be holden of death (Acts 2:24).
2. The vindication of the truth of all His claims (John 2:19; Matt. 12:38-40).
3. The sign of God's approval (Acts 2:23, 24, 31-33).
4. To show that God had accepted Christ's redemptive work in our behalf (Rom. 4:23-25).

IV. The Results of Jesus Christ's Resurrection.

(Answering the question, What then?)

1. With reference to Christ Himself:
   a) It marked Him off as the Son of God in a unique sense (Rom. 1:4).

b) It was the seal of the divine approval upon all His claims (Acts 2:23, 24).

2 With reference to the believer:

a) Assures him of his acceptance with God (Rom. 4:25).

b) Assures him of all needed power (Eph. 1:19-22).

c) Grants to him the Holy Ghost (John 7:37-39; Acts 2:33).

d) Is a guarantee of his own resurrection and immortality (2 Cor. 4:14; John 14:19).

3. With reference to the world of men:

a) Guarantees the resurrection of all men (1 Cor. 15:22). FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE

b) Assures them of the certainty of a EVEN SO. coming judgment (Acts 17:31). CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE

Conclusion.

THEME: THE NEW BIRTH.

Text:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:3-7.

Introduction.

The popular talk concerning the kingdom and how to enter into it, introduced by John the Baptist's ministry.

I. THE NEW BIRTH DEFINED.

Negatively:

1. Not baptism (Gal. 6:15; 1 Cor. 4:15 with 1:14).
2. Not reformation (John 3:6).

Positively:

1. A birth from above—a spiritual quickening (John 3:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17).
2. The impartation of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
3. A new and divine impulse (1 John 3:6-9).

II. The Necessity of the New Birth.

1. Universal (John 3:3-5).
2. Sinful condition of man demands it (John 3:6).
3. Jesus said it was absolutely necessary (John 3:5-7).
4. The holiness of God demands it (Heb. 12:14).

III. How the New Birth Takes Place.

1. The divine side:
   a) The work of God, through the Holy Spirit (John 1:12, 13; 3:5; Titus 3:5).
2. The human side: (Cf. John 1:12, with v. 13).
   a) The acceptance of the gospel message (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15).
   b) The personal acceptance of Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26).

IV. The Results of the New Birth.

1. Godlikeness (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24).
2. Victory over sin (1 John 5:4; 3:9).
3. Righteous living (1 John 2:29).
4. Love towards the brethern (1 John 4:7).

Conclusion.

Have you been born again? If not, what then?

Theme: SPIRITUAL POWER.

Text:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8.

Introduction.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY SPIRITUAL POWER? (What?)

1. Not personal magnetism, eloquence, learning; not a human attainment.
2. A divine gift—the possession of the Spirit of power. (The Greek word for "power" is "dynamite.")

II. THE EVIDENCES OF THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL POWER. (Why?)

1. The sad condition of the Church.
2. The defeated Christian lives, as shown in
   a) Lack of victory over sin.
   b) Lack of testimony for Christ.
   c) Lack of influence for Christ.

III. HOW TO GET SPIRITUAL POWER. (How?)

1. Earnestly desire it.
2. Put away sin.
3. Enthrone Christ.
4. Obey the Spirit.
5. Accept it by faith.

IV. THE RESULTS OF HAVING SPIRITUAL POWER. (What then?)

1. Victory over sinful self.
2. Boldness in testimony.

3. Transfigured and influential life.
4. A quickened Church.

Conclusion.

Theme: FIRST LOVE LOST.

Text:

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Rev. 2:4.

Introduction.

Christ's method of dealing with His Church.

I. What is First Love?

1. The love of espousal or engagement (Jer. 2:2).
2. The love of the new convert.

II. The Necessity of Keeping First Love.

1. Without it orthodoxy and service are nothing.
2. No Church has a right to exist without it (Rev. 2:5).
3. Without love all is lost (1 Cor. 13).

III. Signs of Lost Love.

Not necessarily by:

1. Lack of activity (Rev. 2:2).
2. Lack of orthodoxy (Rev. 2:2).
3. Lack of patient suffering for Christ (Rev. 2:3).

But manifest by the absence of:

4. Personal love in service.
5. Joy in our activity for Christ.
6. Unselfishness and forgetfulness of self.

IV. How First Love is Lost.

The secret of failure is found in the words: "From whence thou art fallen out," implying that the Ephesian Church had gotten out of an atmosphere in which it once lived. This may have happened

1. By neglecting to maintain fellowship and communion with God, by the reading of the Word of God and prayer.
2. By spiritual pride. Forgetting unworthiness still as at the time of conversion.

V. How to Regain Lost Love.

1. Remember—your past experience, the atmosphere in which you once lived, etc.
2. Repent—turn back, confess, promise reformation.
3. Return—do the first works over again.

Conclusion.

Theme: A GREAT SALVATION—ITS REJECTION AND PENALTY.

Text:

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." Hebrews 2:3.

Introduction.

The pre-eminence of Christianity over Judaism.

I. The Salvation Offered.

1. Salvation: its meaning—what?
2. Great: How and why?
   a) Because of its Author (v. 3). The Trinity engaged in its work.

b) Because of what it can do (v. 4).
c) Because of the nature of the proofs, divine and human, submitted for its genuineness (v. 4).

II. An Attitude Described.

1. Neglect. What mean? (v. 1).
   a) Refusing to give heed (v. 1).
   b) Allowing to drift by (v. 1).
   c) Refusing to accept the well attested truth (vv. 3, 4).
   d) Simply do nothing—let things slip (v. 1).

III. A Penalty Visited.

1. Certain (vv. 2, 3); cf. 12:25-29.
2. Just (v. 2).
3. Commensurate with privileges (vv. 2, 3).
4. Described (10:26-29).

Conclusion.

Illustration showing danger and fatal consequences of neglect.

Theme: THE NATURAL SOURCES OF RETRIBUTION.*

Text:

"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Genesis 42:21.

Introduction.

No one text of Scripture contains such a complete survey of the inner sources of human penalty for sin. Nothing is said of any external accusation. Joseph's brethren

*This, and the two outlines following it are by Dr. A. T. Pierson.

do not yet know that it is Joseph before whom they stand. No voice from heaven upbraids them; nor, outside their own company, do there appear to have been any witnesses of their dastardly outrage against their brother's liberty and their father's peace. "They said one to another," as by a simultaneous working of the retributive law in their own breasts, "We are verily guilty," etc.

It is to be noted here that all the factors unite that enter into natural penalty; this makes the mission of this text the more obvious and impressive.

I. MEMORY. "We saw the anguish of his soul."

1. The recalling power of memory. (Twenty years recalled).
2. The minuteness of detail. "He besought us," etc.
3. The peculiar persistence of memory; effort to forget only deepens impression.

II. CONSCIENCE. "We are verily guilty."

Conscience is a compound faculty, the result of the joint working of a sense of rightness and a judgment of right and wrong.

1. The sense of obligation always follows the judgment.
2. Conscience is a whole court in itself: judge, jury, witnesses, sheriff, etc.
3. Remorse is its merciless sheriff and executioner.

III. REASON. "Therefore is this distress come upon us."

Here the punishment, as the logical outcome and reasonable penalty of the crime, is justified.

1. Reason is a faculty which inquires as to the reason of things.

2. It instinctively justifies a deserved punishment.
3. It will ultimately vindicate the just judgment of God.

From all this follows an inevitable conclusion, that, in the persistent attempts to evade the plain Scripture doctrine of retribution, men are resisting, not only the teaching of revelation, but also the testimony of their own inner life. Were there no divine penalties attached to evil doing, man has in himself, as the Latins used to say, "Index, judex, vindex."

Theme: CHRIST'S FOURFOLD WORK.

Text:

"Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.

Introduction.

This is the only text that in four consecutive leading words presents the complete view of Christ's redemptive work. It reminds us of the first time in which the four cardinal points of the compass are emphasized in Scripture, when Abraham, for God's sake, separated from Lot, letting him have the best of the land. Here God seems to say to the disciple, who for holiness' sake separates himself from sin unto God, Life up thine eyes and look northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.

Here are the cardinal points in the spiritual landscape, and they take in the whole horizon of Christ's work for our salvation; and the *order* again is inviolable.

I. WISDOM.

Here Christ's work begins; otherwise we should neither know ourselves nor God. In three ways He be-

comes to us "wisdom from God," as the passage should read.

1. By correcting our errors of opinion and practice.
2. By confirming what is right and good.
3. By revealing what has hitherto been unknown.

II. Righteousness.

1. By His own perfect obedience to the law.
2. By His vicarious and justifying death for sin.
3. By His intercession at God's right hand.

III. Sanctification.

1. By perfect example of holiness.
2. By regeneration, imparting the new nature.
3. By the gift of the indwelling Spirit of holiness.

IV. Redemption.

1. By resurrection of the body; redemption of the body.
2. By final and full deliverance from sin; redemption of Spirit.
3. By ushering us, body and spirit, into the heavenly home.

Theme: THE FOURFOLD USE OF SCRIPTURE.

Text:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16.

Introduction.

Here again four consecutive words embrace the whole realm of Scripture profit, and again the order is a part of the inspiration.

I. Doctrine.

The word means teaching. It covers the same ground as *wisdom* in the preceding outline of Christ's work. As a teacher He

1. Corrects our errors (cf. Matt. 5:21-48).
2. Confirms our right convictions.
3. Reveals new truths.

II. Reproof.

This word seems to refer to the work on the *conscience,* as the preceding outline has to do with the understanding.

1. Compelling the consciousness of sin and guilt.
2. Bringing us before the court of conscience (Rom. 2:15).
3. Constraining to a new rectitude.

III. Correction.

This is not an easy word to render. It seems to carry the idea of reconstruction—setting up fallen man on his feet—restoring him.

1. Discovering the only true foundation (Luke 6:48).
2. Building character and conduct with right material.
3. Out of ruins constructing a temple of God.

IV. Instruction.

Instruction in righteousness. This is teaching, like the first, but it belongs, not to the initial, but to the advanced stage. It is the teaching that fully equips for duty and service.

1. It is knowledge of the mysteries of God.
2. It is the knowledge of the secrets of spiritual power.
3. It is the full furnishing for service.

Theme: THE GAIN OF THE WORLD AND THE LOSS OF THE SOUL.

Text:

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36, 37.

Introduction.

We should be careful to note the two things here contrasted. Not the gaining of the present and the loss of the future—for those who lose the future do not necessarily get the most out of the present. Nor does it mean that in order to gain the future we must lose the present—for those who gain the future really get the best out of this life too.

I. WHAT IS THE WORLD THAT IS GAINED AND THE SOUL THAT IS LOST?

1. The World (1 John 2:15-17).

Everything in the world that appeals to the sense: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." To gain the world means to get all that it has to give along these lines.

2. The Soul (Luke 9:25—the man "himself").

The inner, real manhood and womanhood. To lose the soul means to lose oneself.

II. EVERY PERSON HAS A SOUL OF INFINITE VALUE.

1. The existence of the soul (Gen. 2:7).
2. The value of the soul:
   a) Because of its divine origin.
   b) Because of the price paid for its redemption.

c) Because of the great contention for its possession.
d) Because of the eternal destiny awaiting it.

III. There Is Great Danger of Losing the Soul.

1. There is a sense in which it is already lost.
2. But there is a final loss that takes place in the future.
3. How the soul may be lost.

By trying to gain the world. This gain may be characterized as

a) A supposed gain; "if."
b) An uncertain gain (cf. Luke 12:20).
c) A difficult gain (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10).
d) An unsatisfactory gain (cf. Eccles. 1, 2).

4. The loss of the soul is permanent, irretrievable; no exchange can save it when once its doom has been pronounced.

Conclusion.

Picture yourself, as this text invites you to, at the judgment bar of God, hearing the sentence of doom pronounced upon you, and ask yourself the question of this text: "What shall it have profited me, gaining as I did the whole world, seeing that I have now lost my soul, for which loss there is no exchange, no redemption?" It might be well to close with a striking illustration.

Theme: THE RICH PUBLICAN OF JERICHO FOUND.

Text:

"This day is salvation come to this house." Luke 19:9.

Introduction.

I. HINDRANCES.

1. Popular difficulty—a publican.
2. Moral difficulty—a sinner.
3. Business difficulty—rich.

II. AIDS.

1. He had a desire to see Jesus.
2. He made an effort to see Jesus.
3. He was willing to obey Jesus.

III. RESULTS.

1. A great confession.
2. A great restitution.
3. A great truth heralded (v. 10).

Conclusion.

—Homiletic Review.

EXPOSITORY SERMONS.

Theme: A FOURFOLD ATTITUDE TOWARDS SIN.

Text:

1 John 1:7-2:2.

Introduction.

I. DENYING IT, 1:8-10.

1. Nature of the denial:
   a) As to the possession of a sinful nature (v. 8).
   b) As to the committal of sinful acts (v. 10).
2. What is involved in such denial:
   a) Self-deception (v. 8).
   b) Challenge God's statement (v. 7).

c) Make God a liar (v. 10).
d) The Word of God, as a norm, has no abiding place in the heart (v. 10).

II. Confessing It, 1:9.

1. The nature of confession.
   a) Confess—take sides with God against it. Admit it.
   b) Renounce—forsake what you would have God remit.
   c) Believe in the efficacy of the blood of Christ (v. 7-9).
   d) Accept God's declaration of forgiveness, based on His righteousness and justice (v. 9).
2. The result of confession.
   a) Forgiveness (v. 9).
   b) Cleansing from sin's guilt (v. 7), and sin's power (v. 9).

III. Victory Over It (2:1, cf. 1:7, 9).

1. Victory possible (2:1).
2. Its method—"these things":
   a) Word of God (2:14).
   b) Divine nature (3:9).
   c) Indwelling spirit (4:4).

IV. Repeating It, or Falling Into It, 1:7—2:2.

1. Admit that we do, 2:1.
2. What to do when we do.
   a) Recognize advocacy (2:1, 2).
   b) Recognize provision made for it, (1:7-9; 2:2).
   c) Confess it (see II above).

Conclusion.

BIBLE READINGS.

This Bible Reading on "Peace," while having far too much material for one address, nevertheless, affords a fine illustration as to the untold wealth of Bible truth that can be gotten with the aid of the concordance (Strong's or Young's) and the Bible.

Topic: PEACE.

I. THE MEANING OF PEACE.

1. The Greek word appears to mean "to bind" (εἰρήνη, from εἴρω), implying severance and union.
2. The English word implies a *pact*, compact, an agreement (*paciscor*).
3. The Hebrew word includes the ideas of friendliness, rest, security, *completeness* (שלם).

N. B.—Note the order of experience: Union; agreement; friendship; rest; security; completeness.

II. THE NEED OF PEACE.

1. Peace of conscience in pardon and acceptance, Isa. 48:22; Rom. 3:17; Ps. 120:6.
2. Peace of heart in rest and fellowship, Num. 6:26; 25:12; Ps. 4:8, 29:11.

III. THE PROVISION OF PEACE.

1. "Peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). Barriers removed.
2. "The peace of God" (Phil. 4:7). Burdens relieved.

N. B.—These are distinguished in John 20:19 and 21 (see context); also in John 14:27, peace as a *legacy* and as a *gift*.

IV. The Source of Peace.

1. "Of God," Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15 (cf. R. V.).
2. "The God of Peace," Rom. 15:33, 16:20; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20.

V. The Medium of Peace.

1. Christ's person, Eph. 2:14, αὐτός; Isa. 9:6, Prince; 2 Thess. 3:16, Κύριος; Heb. 7:2, βασιλεύς.
3. Christ's work, Eph. 2:15, ποιῶν; Col. 1:20, εἰρηνοποιήσας. Cf. Isa. 53:5.
3. Christ's preaching, Eph. 2:17; Acts 10:36.
4. Christ's gift, John 14:27.

VI. The Sphere of Peace.

1. In Christ, John 16:33, ἐν.
2. In the Holy Spirit, Rom. 14:17, ἐν.

VII. The Instrumentality of Peace.

1. The Gospel, Eph. 6:15; 1 Cor. 7:15; Luke 1:79.
2. Faith, Rom. 5:1; 15:13.
3. The minding of the Spirit, Rom. 8:6.

VIII. The Characteristics of Peace.

1. Great, Psa. 119:165; cf. Isa. 48:18, "as a river."
2. Abundant. Psa. 37:11 and 72:7, cf. 1 Pet. 1:2 and Jude 2, πληθυνθείη.
3. Indescribable, Phil. 4:7.
4 Perfect, Isa. 26:3.
5. Everlasting, Isa. 9:7, "no end."

IX. The Power of Peace.

1. To fill, Rom. 15:13.
2. To guard, Phil. 4:7.
3. To rule, Col. 3:15, *βραβευέτω* (to umpire).

X. The Companions of Peace.

1. Grace, Rom. 1:7.
2. Mercy, Gal. 6:16.
3. Righteousness, Rom. 14:17.
4. Joy, Rom. 15:13.
5. Faith, 2 Tim. 2:22.
6. Love, 2 Cor. 13:11.
7. Life, Rom. 8:6.
8. Holiness, Heb. 12:14.
9. Purity, Jas. 3:17.
10. Gentleness, Jas. 3:17.

XI. The Outcome of Peace.

1. In character, Gal. 5:22. "fruit * * * * peace."
2. In fellowship, Eph. 4:3, "bond of peace"; Eph. 6:23, cf. *εἰρηνεύειν* in Mark 9:50; Rom. 12:18; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:13.
3. In action, Matt. 5:9, *εἰρηνοποιός;* Jas. 3:17, *εἰρηνικός.*
4. In service, Eph. 6:15, *ἑτοιμασίᾳ * * * * εἰρήνης.*

XII. The Possibilities of Peace.

1. Through life, Mark 5:34, *ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην;* Luke 7:50, *πορεύου εἰς.* * * *
2. At death, Luke 2:29, *ἀπολύεις * * * * ἐν εἰρήνῃ.*
3. In eternity, 2 Pet. 3:14, *αὐτῷ εὑρεθῆναι ἐν εἰρήνῃ.*

XIII. The Scope of Peace.

1. On earth, Luke 2:14.
2. In heaven, Luke 19:38.

XIV. The Secret of Peace.

1. Surrender, Isa. 9:7, "*government* and peace"; 2 Thess. 3:16, "*Lord* of peace."
2. Trust, Isa. 26:3; Rom. 15:13.
3. Obedience, Psa. 119:165; Isa. 32:17; James 3:18.
4. Earnestness, 1 Pet. 3:11, ζητησάτω καὶ διωξάτω; Heb. 12:14, διώκετε.

We can therefore easily understand from all this the imperative necessity of realizing at once, and continually, "the things that belong to our peace" (Luke 19:42), and then of "pursuing the things of peace" (Rom. 14:17).—Record of Christian Work.

Topic: CHRIST SUFFERING FOR US.

After all the passages in the Bible treating on this subject have been looked up and classified, and a general knowledge of the subject obtained, it will be found that there are more passages than can be used in one Bible reading. Sift them; choose the best. The following may be the result:

I. 1 Pet. 3:18—To bring us unto God. A new access.

II. 1 Pet. 2:24—Our death unto sin and unto life. A new death.

III. 2 Cor. 5:21—That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. A new spirit.

IV. Gal. 3:13—That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. A new spirit.

V. 1 Pet. 2:21—That He might leave us an example. A new example.

VI. Titus 2:14—That He might redeem us from all iniquity. A new redemption.

VII. Gal. 1:4—That He might deliver us from this evil world. A new deliverance.

VIII. 1 Thess. 5:10—That we might live together with Him. A new fellowship.

Thus, it will be seen, you have eight intents and results of Christ's vicarious death.

Topic: THE WATER OF LIFE.

I. Its Character.

1. Living, John 4:10.
2. Clear, Rev. 22:1.
3. Pure, Rev. 22:1.
4. Abundant, Ezek. 47:1-9.
5. Free, Rev. 21:6.

II. For Whom Provided?

1. The thirsty, Rev. 21:6.
2. Whosoever, Rev. 22:17.

III. The Way to Obtain It.

1. Come, Rev. 22:17.
2. Take, Rev. 22:17.

Topic: REDEMPTION.

I. What I Am Redeemed With.

1. With blood, 1 Pet. 1:19.
2. With power, Neh. 1:10.

II. What I Am Redeemed From.
   1. Bondage, Exod. 6:6.
   2. Enemy, Psa. 106:10.
   3. Iniquity, Titus 2:14.
   4. Curse of the law, Gal. 3:10.

III. What the Lord Has Redeemed.
   1. The soul, Psa. 49:8.
   2. The body, Rom. 8:23.
   3. The life, Psa. 103:4.

IV. The Beauty of the Redemption.
   1. It is plenteous, Psa. 130:7.
   2. It is precious, Psa. 49:8.
   3. It is eternal, Heb. 9:12.

Topic: THE LOVE OF GOD.

I. It is infinite in its character, John 17:23, 24.
II. It is constraining in its power, 2 Cor. 5:14.
III. It is inseparable in its object, Rom. 8:35-37.
IV. It is individual in its choice, Gal. 2:20.
V. It is universal in its extent, John 3:16.
VI. It is unchanging in its purpose, John 13:1.
VII. It is everlasting in its duration, Jer. 31:3.

Topic: JUSTIFICATION.

I. What it is, Rom. 4:5-8.
II. Who justifies, Rom. 8:33.
III. Who is justified, Rom. 3:24; 5:9.
IV. From what we are justified, Acts 13:39.
V. Result of being justified, Rom. 5:1.

Topic: REPENTANCE.

I. What it is, Matt. 21:29.
II. Its source, 2 Tim. 2:25.

III. Its necessity, Acts 8:22.
IV. Its results, Luke 15:7; 17:3.
V. By whom commanded, Acts 17:30.
VI. In whose name? Luke 24:47.

—Chas. Inglis.

Topic: A BIBLE STUDY ON STANDING.

I. STANDING OF MAN BEFORE GOD APART FROM CHRIST.

1. Past:
   Gen. 1:26, 27. Created in image of God.
   Rom. 5:12. Sin entered, and death by sin.
2. Present:
   Rom. 3:9. All under sin.
   Rom. 3:10-12. None righteous.
   Rom. 3:19. Judgment resting on all.
   Gal. 3:10. All under curse.
3. Future:
   Rev. 21:8. And the unbelieving shall have their part in lake that burneth forever.
   John 3:36. Wrath abideth.

II. STANDING OF MAN BEFORE GOD UNITED WITH CHRIST.

1. Past:
   Eph. 1:11. Predestined according to His purpose.
2. Present:
   Heb. 10:14. Perfected forever.
   2 Cor. 5:21. Righteous.
   Rom. 8:1. No condemnation.
   Gal. 3:13. Redeemed from curse.
3. Future:
   John 14:3. Forever with Him.
   Rom. 8:17. Heirs of God.

—R. S. Beal.

Topic: SEVEN INDISPENSABLE THINGS.

I. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb. 9:22.
II. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6.
III. Without works faith is dead. Jas. 2:26.
IV. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Heb. 12:14.
V. Without love I am nothing. 1 Cor. 13:1-3.
VI. Without chastisement ye are not sons. Heb. 12:8.
VII. Without me (Jesus Christ) ye can do nothing. John 15:5.

—A. C. P. Coote.

GREAT CHAPTERS AS TEXTS.

JOHN XVII.

In the first place, note, that this chapter contains one great theme, viz: "The High-Priestly Prayer of our Lord." Note again, that its setting places it in the last week, indeed, within the last day or so of Our Lord's earthly life. Further, a careful reading of the chapter reveals the three-fold analysis. There are no parallel accounts. Here then is a suggested sermon outline based on this chapter as a text:

Text:
John 17:1-26.

Theme: THE HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER OF OUR LORD.

Introduction.

The important place that prayer, particularly intercessory prayer, occupied in the life of our Lord.

I. Our Lord's Prayer For Himself, 17:1-5.

For His glorification by

1. Enduring the Cross (v. 1, "the hour").
2. Blessing humanity (v. 2, "give eternal life").
3. Perfect obedience (vv. 3-5, "finished the work").

II. Our Lord's Prayer For His Disciples, 17:6-19.

1. Their relation to the Father and the Son described (vv. 6-8).
2. Prayer for their unity (v. 11).
3. Prayer for their preservation from the evil one (vv. 11-16).
4. Prayer for their separation unto service (vv. 17-19).

III. Our Lord's Prayer for the Future Church, 17:20-26.

1. For its unity (vv. 21-23).
2. For its power and testimony before the world (vv. 21-23).
3. That the whole church may be gathered ultimately with Him in the glory (vv. 24-26).

Conclusion.

The strength and inspiration which comes from the consciousness that our High Priest is thus praying for us.

ISAIAH I.

The first chapter of Isaiah, because it presents us with a completed theme, may well be chosen as a text for a sermon. A careful reading of the chapter reveals to us the theme, namely, "God's Controversy with His People." The scene is that of a trial court. God is the

judge and plaintiff; the prophet is the witness; the people of Israel, the defendants; the charge is clearly stated, and the verdict announced. The following may be suggested as an outline:

Text:

Isaiah 1.

Theme: GOD'S CONTROVERSY WITH HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL.

Introduction.

The moral and spiritual condition of the nation at this time.

I. God's Complaint Against His People, 1:1-3.

This complaint or charge is three-fold:

1. Ingratitude (v. 3, "My people doth not consider").
2. Disobedience (vv. 2, 3).
3. Rebellion (vv. 2, 3, "Rebelled against me").

II. The Prophet as a Witness Re-Enforcing God's Indictment, 1:4-9.

1. Showing the course of sin (v. 4).
2. Showing the punishment for sin (vv. 5-9).

III. The People's Plea or Defense, 1:11-14.

1. Laborious sacrifices (vv. 11, 12).
2. Much ceremonialism (vv. 13, 14).

IV. The Conclusion, or Summing Up of the Trial, 1:16-31.

1. The call to repentance and reason (vv. 16-18).
2. The verdict and sentence announced (vv. 19, 20).
3. How the sentence will work out (vv. 21-31).

Other Works by William Evans

The Great Doctrines of the Bible. What the Word of God teaches concerning great fundamental subjects—God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Man, Salvation, the Church, the Scriptures, Angels, Satan, and the Last Things—presented with reasonable appeal, making a very readable book. 277 *pp., Cloth,* $1.50 *net.*

How to Prepare Sermons and Gospel Addresses. An attractive book for every one who would become more effective in telling forth the Word. 200 *pp., Cloth,* $1.25 *net.*

The Book of Books. What It Is; How to Study It. Part One deals with the names of the Bible, its inspiration, genuineness and authenticity, canon, languages, versions, general structure, etc. Part Two takes up the interpretation of the Bible, and its study as a whole by books, chapters, topics, words, etc. 224 *pp. Cloth,* $1.25 *net.*

Personal Soul-Winning. A stimulus and guide to the most effective methods for winning men to Christ. 192 *pp., Cloth,* $1.25 *net.*

Outline Study of the Bible. (With illustrative charts.) "This is truly a fundamental method of Bible study."—*S. S. Times.* 115 *pp., Cloth,* 75c *net.*

How to Memorize. A happy setting forth of the fundamental principles and best suggestions for memorizing. Endorsed by thousands. *Cloth,* 75c *net.*

The Christian: His Creed and Conduct. The contents: I.—The Christian and His Bible; II.—The Christian and His Amusements; III.—The Christian in Business; IV.—The Christian and the Family; V.—His Future Reward. *Cloth,* 75c *net.*

The Book Method of Bible Study. Since every book of the Bible has its own special place and its own special message, it follows that this is a most fruitful method of Bible Study. Malachi, John, Acts, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Hebrews, 1 John, and the Revelation are expounded. 127 *pp., Cloth,* 75c *net.*

Why I Am Not A Christian Scientist. A pamphlet that has been widely received as a sober, scholarly, and convincing refutation of this insidious heresy. 20c *net.*

The Shepherd Psalm. A most refreshing exposition of the 23rd Psalm; a beautiful gift booklet. 84*pp., two colors, illustrated, silk corded, extension covers,* **40c** *net.*

What Every Christian Should Believe. What the Bible teaches about itself, God, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit and Satan. Especially adapted to young and new converts. 128*pp., Cloth,* 90c *net.*

MOODY PRESS

153 Institute Place **CHICAGO**